

EARLY CHRISTIAN PRAYERS

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Edited by

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Translated by

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Certain passages in Prayers 1-36, where the translator has gone back to the original Greek, differ slightly from translations of the Vulgate, but these changes have no dogmatic or exegetical significance.

Part One

PRAYERS FROM
THE INSPIRED BOOKS

I

Prayers from the Gospels

The Lord's Prayer¹

This . . . is to be your prayer:

- 1 OUR Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven;
give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive them that trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.²

Other Prayers Composed by Jesus

ON THE RETURN OF HIS DISCIPLES FROM THEIR FIRST MISSION

At this time, Jesus was filled with gladness by the Holy Spirit, and said:

- 2 O FATHER, who art Lord of heaven and earth,
I give thee praise that thou hast hidden all this
from the wise and the prudent,
and revealed it to little children.
Be it so, Lord, since this finds favour in thy sight.

¹ St. Luke (11:1-4) provides us with a shorter version of the Pater Noster. He adds the detail that Jesus gave this prayer to his disciples at their own request. Polycarp's letter to the Ephesians (6:2), written at the beginning of the second century, is evidence that the early Christians were familiar with the 'Our Father'. The Didache (8) tells us that it was said three times a day. From the fourth century onwards, it is found among the liturgical prayers for the eucharist and baptism. Its use in the liturgy doubtless accounts for the doxology, 'for thine are kingship, power and glory, yea thine for ever'. For ancient commentaries on the 'Our Father', see Part Four.

² The Greek fathers translate: 'deliver us from the Evil One'.

AT THE TOMB OF LAZARUS

Jesus lifted his eyes to heaven and said:

- 3 FATHER, I thank thee for hearing my prayer. For myself, I know that thou hearest me at all times, but I say this for the sake of the multitude which is standing round, that they may learn to believe it is thou who hast sent me.¹

THE INSTITUTION OF THE EUCHARIST²

4 ST. LUKE

Then he took bread, offered thanks, and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, This is my body, given for you; do this for a commemoration of me. And so with the cup, when supper was ended. This cup, he said, is the new testament, in my blood which is to be shed for you.

ST. MARK

And while they were still at table, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, Take this; this is my body. Then he took a cup, and offered thanks, and gave it to them, and they all drank of it. And he said, This is my blood of the new testament, shed for many.

ST. MATTHEW

And while they were still at table, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, Take, eat, this is my body. Then he took a cup, and offered thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink, all of you, of this; for this is my blood, of the new testament, shed for many, to the remission of sins.

*The High-Priestly Prayer,
Offered by Jesus at His Leave-taking³*

- 5 FATHER, the time has come; give glory now to thy Son, that thy Son may give the glory to thee. Thou hast put him in authority over all mankind, to bring eternal life to all those thou hast entrusted to him. Eternal life is knowing thee, who art the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent. I have exalted thy glory on earth, by achieving the task which thou gavest me to do; now, Father, do thou exalt me at thy own side, in that glory which I had with thee before the world began.

¹ The place of honour in these two prayers is occupied by thanksgiving. This was to be an essential feature of the prayer of the early Christians.

² It seemed worth while to give the gospel narratives of the institution of the eucharist, even though they do not tell us exactly what psalms and blessings were used by Jesus and his disciples. They form the essential nucleus round which, as we shall see later, the whole of the liturgy of the eucharist, which is the heart of all Christian prayer, was built.

³ The object of this farewell prayer is to promote the glory of the Lord and to produce unity among the apostles and among all those who, in the course of the Church's history, will come to believe in Jesus. It is known as the 'prayer for unity' or, more usually, the 'high-priestly prayer'. The latter designation alludes to vv. 17-19, in which Jesus announces the sacrifice that is to take place on the morrow.

I have made thy name known to the men whom thou hast entrusted to me, chosen out of the world. They belonged to thee, and have become mine through thy gift, and they have kept true to thy word. Now they have learned to recognise all the gifts thou gavest me as coming from thee; I have given them the message which thou gavest to me, and they, receiving it, recognised it for truth that I came from thee, and found faith to believe that it was thou who didst send me. It is for these I pray; I am not praying for the world, but for those whom thou hast entrusted to me; they belong to thee; as all I have is thine, and all thou hast is mine; and in them my glory is achieved.

I am remaining in the world no longer, but they remain in the world, while I am on my way to thee.

Holy Father, keep them true to thy name, thy gift to me, that they may be one, as we are one. As long as I was with them, it was for me to keep them true to thy name, thy gift to me; and I have watched over them so that only one has been lost, he whom perdition claims for its own, in fulfilment of the scripture. But now I am coming to thee; and while I am still in the world, I am telling them this, so that my joy may be theirs, and reach its full measure in them.

I have given them thy message, and the world has nothing but hatred for them, because they do not belong to the world, as I, too, do not belong to the world. I am not asking that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldst keep them clear of what is evil. They do not belong to the world, as I, too, do not belong to the world: keep them holy, then, through the truth; it is thy word that is truth. Thou hast sent me into the world on thy errand, and I have sent them into the world on my errand; and I dedicate myself for their sakes, that they too may be dedicated through the truth.

It is not only for them that I pray; I pray for those who are to find faith in me through their word; that they may all be one; that they too may be one in us, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee; so that the world may come to believe that it is thou who hast sent me. And I have given them the privilege which thou gavest to me, that they should all be one, as we are one; that while thou art in me, I may be in them, and so they may be perfectly made one. So let the world know that it is thou who hast sent me, and that thou hast bestowed thy love upon them, as thou hast bestowed it upon me.

This, Father, is my desire, that all those whom thou hast entrusted to me may be with me where I am, so as to see my glory, thy gift made to me, in that love which thou didst bestow upon me before the foundation of the world. Father, thou art just; the world has never acknowledged thee, but I have acknowledged thee, and these men have acknowledged that thou didst

send me. I have revealed, and will reveal, thy name to them; so that the love thou hast bestowed upon me may dwell in them, and I, too, may dwell in them.

Prayer at Gethsemani

6 ABBA,¹ Father, all things are possible to thee; take away this chalice from before me; only as thy will is, not as mine is.

On The Cross

Jesus said:

7 FATHER, forgive them; they do not know what it is they are doing.

Jesus cried out with a loud voice:

Eloi, Eloi lamma sabachthani?

which means:

My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?

And Jesus said, crying with a loud voice:

Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit.

THE FIRST HYMNS

Mary's Song: The Magnificat²

8 MY soul magnifies the Lord;
my spirit has found joy in God,
who is my Saviour,
because he has looked graciously
upon his handmaid's lowliness.
Behold, from this day forward,
all generations will count me blessed;

¹ 'Abba' is an Aramaic word meaning 'Father'. It implies a filial attitude to God. Pascal's comment on the incident, in the 'Mystère de Jésus', is that Jesus is praying without any certain knowledge of the will of God and that he is afraid of death. The petition, 'Thy will be done', in the Lord's Prayer, is here thrown into tragic relief because Christ is experiencing its urgency in his very being.

² Of all the evangelists, St. Luke is the one who says most about prayer. He is also the only one to have preserved the three songs composed in thanksgiving by Mary, Zachary and Simeon. The Magnificat, with its mosaic of biblical phrases, is surely the hymn par excellence to the goodness and kindness of God. The Church sings it at vespers, the evening service, held at the hour when Christ offered the 'evening sacrifice' to his Father on the cross.

for he who is mighty, whose name is holy,
has wrought for me his wonders.
He has mercy on those who fear him,
from generation to generation.

He has done valiantly with the strength of his arm,
driving the proud astray in their hearts' conceit;
he has put down the mighty from their seat,
and exalted the lowly;
he has filled the hungry with good things,
and sent the rich away empty-handed.
He has protected his servant Israel,
keeping his merciful design in remembrance,
according to the promise he made to our forefathers,
Abraham and his descendants for evermore.

Zachary's Song: the Benedictus¹

9 BLESSED be the Lord, the God of Israel;
He has visited his people
and wrought their redemption.
He has raised up a sceptre of salvation for us
among the posterity of his servant David,
according to the promise which he made
by the lips of holy men,
his prophets from the beginning;
salvation from our enemies
and from the hand of all who hate us.
So he would carry out his merciful design
towards our fathers,
by remembering his holy covenant.
He had sworn an oath to our father Abraham,
that he would enable us
to live without fear in his service,
delivered from the hands of our enemies,
passing all our days in holiness
and approved in his sight.
And thou, my child, wilt be known

¹ The song of the priest Zachary recalls the main phases of Jewish history, from which can be discerned God's intention of saving his people. In the Roman liturgy, the Benedictus is used to greet the dawn, at lauds.

for a prophet of the Most High,
going before the Lord
to clear his way for him;
thou wilt make known to his people
the salvation
that is to release them from their sins.
Such is the merciful kindness of our God,
which has bidden him come to us,
like a dawning from on high,
to give light to those who live in darkness,
in the shadow of death,
and to guide our feet
into the way of peace.

*Simeon's Song: the Nunc Dimittis*¹

10 RULER of all, now dost thou let thy servant go
in peace, according to thy word;

for my own eyes have seen that saving power of thine
which thou hast prepared in the sight of all nations.
This is the light which shall give
revelation to the Gentiles, this is the glory
of thy people Israel.

¹ Simeon's song emphasises the universality of salvation. It was used for evening prayer as early as the end of the fourth century, as the Apostolic Constitutions show. The Roman Church still uses this hymn of thanksgiving today in the office of compline.

2

Prayers from the Acts of the Apostles

Besides continuing to pray as they did when they were Jews (Acts 2 : 46; 3 : 1), the first Christians are found meeting together for the breaking of bread (the eucharist) and for prayers (Acts 2 : 42). Their cheerfulness is remarked upon; their praise of God centres on the memory of his resurrection and the expectation of his return.

The Prayer of the Faithful when the Apostles were Released¹

II RULER of all, thou art the maker of heaven and earth and the sea, and all that is in them. Thou hast said through thy Holy Spirit, by the lips of thy servant David, our father:

What means this turmoil among the nations?
why do the peoples cherish vain dreams?
See how the kings of the earth stand in array,
how its rulers make common cause,
against the Lord and his Christ.

True enough, in this city of ours, Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel to aid them, made common cause against thy holy servant Jesus, whom thou hadst anointed, and so they accomplished all that thy power and wisdom had decreed. Look down upon their threats, Lord, now as of old; enable thy servants to preach thy word confidently, by stretching out thy hand to heal; and let signs and miracles be performed in the name of Jesus, thy holy Son.

¹ This prayer, the earliest one to come down to us from the original Christian community, still has a Jewish cast of thought about it. It invokes God in the old way, as the sovereign Lord of all that is. The new and specifically Christian element in it is that its petitions are made through Jesus.

*The Last Prayer of Stephen, the Deacon¹**While they stoned him, Stephen prayed, saying:*

12 LORD Jesus, receive my spirit.

*Then, kneeling down, he cried aloud:*Lord, do not count this sin against them.

¹ This moving prayer of Stephen's, so reminiscent of his Master's, is the first one to be found addressed directly to Christ. Subsequent martyrs, too, were to invoke in their last moments the God-man who had been before them with his martyrdom, on the cross. He seemed to be all the closer to them when once the time had come for them to go to their meeting with him.

3

Prayers from the Epistles

What gave Paul's prayer its vital impulse was the fact that ever since his conversion he had been possessed by the Spirit: 'God has sent out the spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying out, Abba, Father' (Gal. 4:6). This inner urge was so strong that it revealed itself in all his letters (especially the Letter to the Ephesians)—they are all shot through with prayers, whether implicit only or couched in the accepted forms.

Thanksgiving for God's blessings was an essential part of his prayer. As with the Jews, it issued in adoration. This bent towards worship found expression particularly in doxologies and blessings. The prayer of petition is often found, either for Paul's personal needs or, more often, for his ministry.

His prayers are usually addressed to the Father, the source of all grace—a rule later to be followed by the Church. Christ appears as Mediator. Prayer is hardly ever addressed to him directly.

Besides this personal prayer, Paul's letters provide us with fragments of hymns and acclamations from the primitive liturgy. These new compositions are now found side by side with the old psalms of expectation.

'Let your contentment,' the apostle says, 'be in the Holy Spirit; your tongues unloosed in psalms and hymns and spiritual music, as you sing and give praise to the Lord in your hearts. Give thanks continually to God, who is our Father, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ' (Eph. 5:19-20).

LETTER TO THE ROMANS

Hymn to God's Wisdom

- 13 How deep is the mine of God's wisdom,
of his knowledge;
how inscrutable are his judgements,
how undiscoverable his ways!
Who has ever understood the Lord's thoughts
or been his counsellor?
Who ever was the first to give,
and so earned his favours?

All things find in him
their origin, impulse, and goal;
to him be glory throughout all ages. Amen.

Petitions for the Brethren

- 14 **MAY** God, the author of all endurance and all encouragement, enable you to be all of one mind according to the mind of Christ Jesus, so that you may all have but one heart and one mouth, to glorify God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. . . .

May God, the author of our hope, fill you with all joy and peace in your believing; so that you may have hope in abundance, through the power of the Holy Spirit. . . .

May God, the author of peace, be with you all, Amen. . . .

God, who is the author of peace, will crush Satan under your feet before long.

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

Doxology

- 15 **THERE** is one who is able to set your feet firmly in the path of that gospel which I preach, when I herald Jesus Christ; a gospel which reveals the mystery,¹ hidden from us through countless ages, but now made plain, through what the prophets have written; now published, at the eternal God's command, to all the nations, so as to win the homage of their faith. To him, to God who alone is wise, glory be given from age to age, through Jesus Christ, Amen.

LETTERS TO THE CORINTHIANS

Thanksgiving

- 16 **GRACE** and peace be yours from God, who is our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

I give thanks to my God continually in your name for that grace of God which has been bestowed upon you in Jesus Christ; that you have become rich, through him, in every way, in eloquence and in knowledge of every sort; so fully has the message of Christ established itself among you. And now there is no gift in which you are still lacking; you have only to look

¹ 'Mystery' is a term dear to St. Paul. As it is so rich in content, it can take on various shades of meaning. Here it denotes God's plan for our salvation. Through Christ Jesus, God wants to save all men and make them his people.

forward to the revealing¹ of our Lord Jesus Christ. He will strengthen your resolution to the last, so that no charge will lie against you on the day when our Lord Jesus Christ comes. The God, who has called you into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, is faithful to his promise.

Hymn to Love

17 I MAY speak with every tongue that men
and angels use;
yet, if I lack charity,
I am no more than echoing bronze
or the clash of cymbals.
I may have powers of prophecy,
no secret hidden from me,
no knowledge too deep for me;
I may have utter faith,
to the moving of mountains;
yet, if I have not charity,
I count for nothing.
I may give all I have away
to feed the poor;
I may give up my body
to be burnt at the stake;
but if I lack charity,
it goes for nothing.

Charity is patient, is kind; charity feels no envy;
charity does not boast, is never
self-important, indecorous,
does not claim its rights, cannot be provoked,
does not brood on injury;
takes no pleasure in wrong-doing,
but rejoices when truth has the victory;
sustains, believes, hopes, endures
to the last.

Though the time will come when we
shall outgrow prophecy, when speaking with tongues
will come to an end, when knowledge
will be swept clean away;
we shall never be finished with charity.

¹ 'Revealing' and 'day' are synonymous terms denoting Christ's second coming, in glory, at the end of time.

Our knowledge, our prophecy,
are only glimpses of truth;
glimpses to be swept away
when the time of fulfilment comes.
Just so, when I was a child,
I had the intelligence,
the thought of a child;
since I became a man,
I have outgrown childish ways.

At present we see in a mirror
a confused reflection;
then, we shall see face to face.
Now I have only glimpses of knowledge;
then I shall recognise God,
as he has recognised me.
Meanwhile, faith, hope and charity
persist, all three;
but the greatest of them
is charity.

Blessing

- 18 GRACE and peace be yours from God, our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the merciful Father, the God who gives all encouragement. He it is who comforts us in all our trials; and it is this encouragement we ourselves receive from God which enables us to comfort others, whenever they have trials of their own.

LETTER TO THE EPHESIANS

Blessing

- 19 BLESSED be that God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us, in Christ, with every spiritual blessing, higher than heaven itself.

He has chosen us out, in Christ, before the foundation of the world, to be saints, to be blameless in his sight, for love of him; marking us out beforehand (so his will decreed) to be his adopted children through Jesus Christ. Thus would he manifest the splendour of that grace by which he has taken us into his favour in the person of his beloved Son.

It is in him and through his blood that we enjoy redemption, the forgiveness of our sins. So rich is God's grace, that has overflowed upon us in a full

stream of wisdom and discernment, to make known to us the hidden purpose of his will. It was his loving design, centred in Christ, to give history its fulfilment by resuming everything in him, all that is in heaven, all that is on earth, summed up in him.

In him it was our lot to be called, singled out beforehand to suit his purpose (for it is he who is at work everywhere, carrying out the designs of his will); we were to manifest his glory, we who were the first to set our hope in Christ.¹

In him you too² were called, when you listened to the preaching of the truth, that gospel which is your salvation. In him you too learned to believe, and had the seal set on your faith by the promised gift of the Holy Spirit; a pledge of the inheritance which is ours, to redeem it for us and bring us into possession of it, and so manifest God's glory.

Well then, I too play my part; I have been told of your faith in the Lord Jesus, of the love you show towards all the saints, and I never cease to offer thanks on your behalf, or to remember you in my prayers. So may he who is the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father to whom glory belongs, grant you a spirit of wisdom and insight, to give you fuller knowledge of himself. May your inward eye be enlightened, so that you may understand to what hopes he has called you, how rich in glory is that inheritance of his found among the saints, what surpassing virtue there is in his dealings with us, who believe.³

Prayer

20 I FALL on my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, that Father from whom all fatherhood in heaven and on earth takes its title. May he, out of the rich treasury of his glory, strengthen you through his Spirit with a power that reaches your innermost being.⁴ May Christ find a dwelling-place, through faith, in your hearts; may your lives be rooted in love, founded on love. May you and all the saints be enabled to measure, in all its breadth and length and height and depth,⁵ the love of Christ, to know what passes knowledge. May you be filled with all the completion God has to give.

¹ The reference is to the Jews, who, in the designs of providence, were the first to be called.

² The converts from paganism.

³ To the apostle, the Church is a kind of workshop, in which the activity of every worker is directed the whole time towards finishing the work. Hence the emphasis he gives to the ideas of hope and promise.

⁴ The depths renewed by baptism and continually under the influence of the Holy Spirit.

⁵ The various factors in God's plan for us.

He whose power is at work in us is powerful enough, and more than powerful enough, to carry out his purpose beyond all our hopes and dreams; may he be glorified in the Church, and in Christ Jesus, to the last generation of eternity. Amen.

LETTER TO THE PHILIPPIANS

Thanksgiving

- 21 I GIVE thanks to my God for all my memories of you, happy at all times in all the prayer I offer for all of you; so full a part have you taken in the work of Christ's gospel, from the day when it first reached you till now. Nor am I less confident, that he who has inspired this generosity in you will bring it to perfection, ready for the day when Jesus Christ comes.

It is only fitting that I should entertain such hopes for you; you are close to my heart, and I know that you all share my happiness in being a prisoner, and being able to defend and assert the truth of the gospel. God knows how I long for you all, with the tenderness of Jesus Christ himself.

And this is my prayer for you; may your love grow richer and richer yet, in the fulness of its knowledge and the depth of its perception, so that you may learn to prize what is of value; may nothing cloud your consciences or hinder your progress till the day when Christ comes;¹ may you reap, through Jesus Christ, the full harvest of your justification to God's glory and praise.

LETTER TO THE COLOSSIANS

Prayer

- 22 So, ever since the news reached us, we have been praying for you in return, unceasingly. Our prayer is, that you may be filled with that closer knowledge of God's will which brings all wisdom and all spiritual insight with it. May you live as befits his servants, waiting continually on his pleasure; may the closer knowledge of God bring you fruitfulness and growth in all good. May you be inspired, as his glorious power can inspire you, with full strength to be patient and to endure; to endure joyfully, thanking God our Father for making us fit to share the light which saints inherit, for rescuing us from the power of darkness, and transferring us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, . . . in whom we find the redemption that sets us free from our sins.²

¹ The day of the second coming, the day of Christ's manifestation, is continually before the apostle's mind.

² The considerations that move the apostle to prayer should be the chief inspiration of our petitions, too, as we learn from Jesus himself in the 'Our Father'.

Hymns and Chants Quoted by St. Paul

- 23 A WAKE, thou that sleepest,
and arise from the dead,
and Christ shall give thee light.¹
- 24 H O N O U R and glory
through endless ages
to the king of all the ages,
the immortal,
the invisible,
who alone is God.
Amen.²
- 25 N O question of it, it is a great mystery we worship.
Revelation made in human nature,
justification won in the realm of the Spirit;
a vision seen by angels,
a mystery preached to the Gentiles;
Christ in this world, accepted by faith,
Christ, on high, taken up into glory.
- 26 T H E blessed God
who alone enjoys dominion;
the King of kings
and Lord of lords;
to whom alone immortality belongs,
who dwells in unapproachable light;
whom no human eye has seen
or ever can see:
to him be glory and everlasting empire.
Amen.
- 27 W E are to share his life
because we have shared his death;
if we endure,
we shall reign with him,
if we disown him,

¹ Theodoret tells us that some of his predecessors regarded this as a fragment of an early hymn. It would be particularly appropriate to the ceremonies of baptism, which are so full of the symbolism of death and resurrection.

² The Church has included this magnificent doxology among the liturgical prayers for the hour of prime.

he in his turn will disown us.
If we play him false, he remains true to his word;
he cannot disown himself.

That is why, when we give glory to God,
it is through him that we say
our Amen.¹

ST. JUDE'S LETTER

28 THERE is one who can keep you clear of fault, and enable you to stand in the presence of his glory, triumphant and unreprieved; to him, who alone is God, to him, who gives us salvation through Jesus Christ our Lord, glory and majesty and power and domination are due, before time was, and now, and for all ages. Amen.

¹ St. Paul is here alluding to the liturgical Amen, which was taken over by the Church from the Synagogue and used at the end of the thanksgiving as an expression of assent.

4

Chants from the Apocalypse

The action of the Apocalypse¹ takes place within the framework of Christian worship. The seer assigns his visions to the 'Lord's day' (1:10), i.e. to the time when the community was assembled. He regards the Church's worship as an anticipation of the liturgy of heaven: the two celebrations are parallel and there is continuity between them.

For this reason, reminiscences of the liturgy, of hymns and of prayers, are found scattered throughout the Apocalypse, from the doxology at the end of the salutation (1:6) to the 'Marana tha', the 'Come, Lord Jesus' that closes the book (22:20). The first five chapters together seem to be following the course of the liturgy.

Doxologies

- 29 HE has proved his love for us by washing us clean from our sins
in his own blood;
he has made us a royal race of priests,²
to serve God, his Father;
glory and power be his throughout endless ages,
Amen.

Each of the four figures had six wings, with eyes everywhere looking outwards and inwards; day and night they cried unceasingly:

- 30 HOLY, holy, holy is the Lord,
God the Almighty,
who ever was, and is, and is still to come.³

¹ 'Apocalypse' means 'revelation'.

² The promise made to the Jewish people (Exod. 19:6) is fulfilled for the Church, which is the true Israel. The Church is a nation whose king is God and whose members, in conjunction with Christ the Priest, offer the whole universe to God as a sacrifice in his praise.

³ The Sanctus, inspired by Is. 6:3, may have been used as a doxology as early as the time of the apostles. From the fourth century onwards, it comes at the end of the preface in the mass.

Chants in Honour of the Lamb

The twenty-four elders . . . threw down their crowns before the throne, crying out:

- 31 THOU, our Lord God, claimest as thy due
glory and honour and power;
by thee all things were created;
nothing ever was, nothing was ever created,
but in obedience to thy will.

It was a new hymn¹ they sang:

- 32 THOU Lord art worthy to take up the book and break the seals that are on it.
Thou wast slain in sacrifice;
out of every tribe, every language, every people, every nation
thou hast redeemed us with thy blood and given us to God.
Thou hast made them a royal race of priests, to serve God;
they will reign as kings over the earth.

Then I heard the voices of a multitude of angels, standing on every side of the throne, where the living figures and the elders were, in ten thousands of ten thousands and thousands of thousands, and crying aloud:²

- 33 POWER and riches, wisdom and strength,
honour and glory and blessing
are his by right, the lamb that was slain.

And every creature in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth and on the sea, and all that is in them, I heard crying out together:

Blessing and honour and glory and power,
through endless ages,
to him who sits on the throne,
and to the Lamb.

Then the four living creatures said:

Amen.

¹ The new hymn, which takes up where Moses' hymn leaves off, corresponds to the new and final order established by Christ.

² The theme of the gathering of the court of heaven about the throne recurs in the Didache, 9:4.

The Song of the Lamb

Theirs is the song of God's servant Moses, theirs is the song of the Lamb:

34 LORD God almighty, the deeds thou doest
are great and wonderful;
King of the nations,
thy ways are just and true.
Lord, thou alone art holy;
who shall refuse reverence
and glory to thy name?
All the nations shall come
and fall down before thee,
now that thy just retribution
has been made known.¹

Triumphal Chant

Therupon I heard, as it seemed, the voices of countless multitudes crying out in heaven:

35 ALLELUIA;
salvation and glory and power
belong to our God;
his sentence is ever true and just,
and now he has given sentence
against the great harlot,
who poisoned the earth with her harlot's ways;
now he has called her to account
for the blood of his servants.

And again they cried:

Alleluia,
the smoke of her burning
goes up everlastingly.

¹ The song of Moses was a thanksgiving for the deliverance of the chosen people from slavery in Egypt. The exodus was a sign of the salvation to come, the paschal lamb foretold the sacrifice of Christ.

On the night of his betrayal, Jesus gave his life to deliver us from the powers of darkness and incorporate us into the kingdom of God. That is why the elect sing both the song of Moses and the song of the Lamb in the same breath, as it were. The continuity of God's designs for our salvation is thereby brought out to perfection. The song of the Lamb is composed of verses from the Old Testament, as if to mark the parallelism.

These points have been developed in *La Rédemption et l'histoire du monde*, 2nd ed., Paris, 1951.

Then the twenty-four elders and the four living figures fell down and worshipped God, where he sits enthroned, crying:

Amen, Alleluia.

And a voice came from the throne, which said:

Praise our God, all you that are his servants,
and all you that fear him, little and great alike.

Thereupon I heard, as it seemed, the noise of a great multitude, like the noise of water in flood, or the noise of deep thunder, as they cried out:

Alleluia,
the Lord our God, the Almighty,
has claimed his kingdom;
let us rejoice and triumph
and give him the praise;
the time has come
for the wedding-feast of the Lamb.
His bride has clothed herself
in readiness for it;
hers it is to wear
linen of shining white.¹

Prayer for the Lord's Coming

The Spirit and the bride say:

36 COME.

Let every one who hears this read out say:

Come.

He who gives this warning says:

Indeed I am coming soon.
Be it so, then; come, Lord Jesus.²
May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ
be with you all.
Amen.

¹ In sharp contrast to the infidelities of Babylon, which are compared to the sins of a prostitute, the people of God, seen as finally united to him, is compared to the Church married to Christ. The image, a favourite one with the prophets—Osias and Jeremias particularly—and the subject of considerable elaboration in St. Paul, is here given its full development.

² The *maranatha* said at the liturgical assembly (1 Cor. 16:22; 11:26) was the Christian summons to the Christ who was to return as sovereign Lord. It occurs again in the Didache (10); see no. 155 below.

Part Two

PRAYERS COMPOSED IN
THE FIRST FEW GENERATIONS
(c. 100–225)

I

The Oldest Christian Literature

The Church was well aware that she was the true Israel and the heiress to all that was of divine origin in the history of the Jews. In the Psalms, which were always on her lips, she possessed a legacy from her fathers, the prayer of her own childhood. And there is much to remind us of the Old Testament in the new forms of prayer, for they are shot through with biblical reminiscences.

What is entirely new is the doctrine of the mediation of Christ. That is the link between the two Testaments. Henceforth, all prayer is offered through Christ and sometimes is even addressed to him directly, though generally it is to the Father that the Church offers her praise, thanksgiving and supplication, as Jesus had taught her. Origen confesses that he has searched the Old Testament in vain for a prayer venturing to call God Father (De Oratione, 22, 1).

Doxologies, too, are at first addressed to the Father. The Son is sometimes associated with him, and in the third century the Holy Spirit also appears.

Approaching our objective by a number of convergent paths, we will try to see how the prayer of these first few generations of Christians took shape.

CLEMENT OF ROME

St. Clement was one of the earliest successors of St. Peter in the see of Rome, and as such, intervened in the affairs of the Christian community at Corinth. The letter he wrote to them in the year 96, or thereabouts, was regarded as highly authoritative; so much so that it is found in some MSS. immediately after the letters of the apostles.

It contains the oldest Christian prayer known outside Scripture. This prayer closely follows the Eighteen Blessings, recited daily by the Jews, and it gives us some idea of what the improvised prayer in the earliest forms of the liturgy must have been like.

It embraces all needs. The emotion behind it is controlled, sober and dignified, foreshadowing the Roman liturgy. It is 'biblical and traditional, respecting and loving the past, yet at the same time aquiver with joys and hopes that are new'.

Prayer for All Needs

37 MAY he who created everything
keep the number of his chosen people, throughout the world,

up to the strength he fixed for them
 through his dear Child,¹ Jesus Christ.
 Through him he called us from darkness to light,
 from ignorance to knowledge
 of the glory of his name.

We have confidence in you:
 you were at the beginning of creation;
 you have opened our inward eyes
 to give us knowledge of you,
 who alone are the Most High, in highest heaven,
 the Holy One, at ease among the holy.

You curb the arrogance of the proud,
 frustrate the designs of the Gentiles,
 lift up the modest
 and bring the mighty down,
 give riches and poverty,
 death and life.

You alone watch over the interests of spiritual beings,
 you are the God of all flesh.
 You gaze into the depths,
 you watch what men are doing.
 You are our help in danger,
 you save the despairing,
 Creator and Keeper of all that is spiritual.
 You give increase to the peoples of the earth,
 and from them all you chose us out who love you,
 through Jesus Christ, your dear Child,
 who brought us instruction, holiness and honour.

We beg you, Lord,²
 to help and defend us.
 Deliver the oppressed,
 pity the insignificant,
 raise the fallen,
 show yourself to the needy,
 heal the sick,

¹ The Greek *παῖς* has been rendered 'child', but it could also be 'servant'. 'Son' would not be correct.

² These petitions foreshadow the deacon's litanies as they are found in all the ancient liturgies, with their mention of all the objects for which prayer can be offered. See below, nos. 47, 170, 183.

bring back those of your people who have gone astray,
feed the hungry,
lift up the weak,
take off the prisoners' chains.
May every nation come to know
that you alone are God,
that Jesus Christ is your Child,
that we are your people, the sheep that you pasture.

You have shown by what you have made and done
how the world has been planned from eternity.
The earth is your creation, Lord,
yours that are true to every generation,
just when you judge,
your strength and splendour a marvel.
Such competence yours in creating,
such skill in setting firm the things you make,
your goodness apparent in this world we see.
You are loyal to those who trust you,
merciful, compassionate.
Forgive us our sins, our injustice,
our falls, our jarring deeds.

Do not count every one
of your servants' sins,
but cleanse us with the cleanness of your truth
and guide our steps in . . . inward holiness,
that so we may do what is just and pleasing
to you and to our rulers.¹
Let us see your face, sovereign Master,²
and we shall peacefully pursue what is good,
protected by your strong hand,
kept from all sin by your mighty arm,
preserved from those who hate us without cause.

Give concord and peace
to us and to all living on the earth,
as you gave them to our fathers

¹ Though written when Domitian was persecuting the Church, this prayer is full of the spirit of obedience and prays for those who are the trustees of God's power.

² The word *δεσπότης*, 'sovereign', denotes not a tyrannical master but a good and kindly one.

when they prayed to you, believing truly,
ready to obey the All Powerful, the All Holy.

To those who rule and lead us on the earth
you, sovereign Master,
have given their authority and kingship
—so marvellous that power of yours words fail to express—
that seeing the glory and honour
you have provided for them,
we should be subject to their rule,
not resisting your will.
Grant them, Lord,
the health, peace, concord and stability
to use aright
the sovereignty you have bestowed on them.
For you, King of heaven, Lord of the ages, you it is
that give to mortal men
glory, honour and power
over what is on the earth.
Lord, make their counsels conform to what is good
and pleasing to you,
that using with reverence,
peacefully, gently,
the power you have given them,
they may find favour with you.

You alone have the means to do this for us,¹
this and more than this.

We thank you for it through Jesus Christ,
the High Priest, our souls' Protector.
Glory and splendour be yours through him,
now at this moment,
in every generation,
age after age. Amen.

IGNATIUS OF ANTIOCH

(†c. 107)

The letters of St. Ignatius contain no prayers properly so called, but only expressions of his heart's desires and longings, uttered to the Father or to Christ. God is not so much the Lord to him as the Father, and St. Ignatius prays to him through Jesus. In their

¹ The doxology is addressed to the Father alone, through Jesus Christ.

spontaneity, his ejaculations are the earliest evidence we have of the live, inward quality in personal prayer.

Singing to the Father

38 YOUR . . . presbytery¹ . . . is one with its bishop, as the strings are one with the lyre: that is why in your concord and in the harmony of your love there is praise for Jesus Christ. And you have all been formed into one choir, to . . . sing God's song together and praise the Father with one voice through Jesus Christ, that when he hears you he may realise from what you have done so well that you are of his Son's members.

Christian Prayer

39 YOU ought all to behave as God does and respect one another; none of you should look at his neighbour in a merely natural light: no, you must love one another in Jesus Christ whatever happens. Do not tolerate anything that may divide you, but stay united round your bishop and your leaders: that will be a sign and token of the life you will lead in eternity.

. . . Do not imagine that any good can come of acting on your own, in opposition to the community. You should all be as one in your prayers and petitions, one in outlook, one in relying on love, which will bring you wholesome delight. Then you will be as the one Jesus Christ: there can be nothing better than that.

. . . Lose no time in gathering together in God's one temple, round its one altar—the one Jesus Christ, who, coming from the one Father, was still one with him and now has gone back to him.²

Prayer

40 I AM God's wheat. May I be ground by the teeth of the wild beasts until I become the fine white bread that is Christ's.

My passions are crucified, there is no heat in my flesh. A stream flows murmuring inside me; deep down in me it says: Come to the Father.³

¹ The presbytery is the college of priests grouped round the bishop. A glossary of difficult words and technical terms will be found at the end of the book.

² The stress here laid on the idea of oneness recalls the Epistle to the Ephesians, 4:4-5, where St. Paul speaks of the oneness of God in himself, the oneness of Christ with God, and the oneness of Christians with Christ and with one another.

³ Here again we find the eager expectancy that shows through the latter part of the Apocalypse. This time it centres round the Father.

Resolutions

41 NOW at last I am beginning to be a disciple.

Woe to any creature that dares grudge me the possession of Jesus Christ. The Devil may inflict his ugly penalties on me—fire, the cross, wild beasts in hordes; he may tear me to pieces, quarter me, dislocate my bones, crush every part of my body—if only I can come at Jesus Christ.

No earthly pleasure can bring me any good, no temporal kingdom. It is better for me to die and obtain Jesus Christ than to rule over the ends of the earth . . . For he it is I am seeking, and he died for us; he that I am determined to have rose again for us. I am on the point of achieving my desires. Understand my position, brothers. Do not prevent me from living, do not try to kill me: do not give to the world or coax with material things one who wants to belong to God. Let me win through to the clear light; that done, I shall be a man. Let me suffer as my God suffered. If you have God in you, try to understand what I want, and when you see what straits I am in, give me your sympathy.¹

IRENÆUS OF LYONS

(†c. 202)

Born at Smyrna, St. Irenæus was taught by St. Polycarp, who had known St. John. He became Bishop of Lyons. As a witness to the faith of this age, he is among the most expressive. His antidote to the different varieties of gnosticism is first and foremost the teaching handed down by the apostles and preserved by the infallible Church.

As in St. Paul's writings and later in Origen's, in his too prayer is never far from the surface. His prayer is traditional, addressed to God the Father, inspired by his love for the Church and for souls.

Prayer to God the Father

42 I APPEAL to you, Lord, God of Abraham, God of Isaac, God of Jacob and Israel, you the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Infinitely merciful as you are, it is your will that we should learn to know you. You made heaven and earth, you rule supreme over all that is. You are the true, the only God; there is no other god above you.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ . . . and the gifts of the Holy Spirit, grant that all who read what I have written here may know you, because you alone

¹ St. Ignatius is here speaking either to Jesus or to his Father, without distinguishing between them. Christ appears in this prayer as the God-Man.

are God; let them draw strength from you; keep them from all teaching that is heretical, irreligious or godless.¹

Prayer for the Conversion of Heretics

- 43 I PRAY that they may not remain in the pit that they themselves have dug, but may part from this Mother, leave the Abyss and abandon the Ogdoad.² May they turn to God's Church and be born the proper way; may Christ take shape in them; may they realise that it is the one true God and Lord of all who has fashioned and made this universe. In praying after this fashion, I am loving them to some purpose; my love is more to the point than the love they imagine they have for themselves, and since it is real, it will do them good, provided that they respond to it. Like a drug which, though bitter, removes from a wound the superfluous flesh that does not belong there, it will reduce to the normal state the swelling their pride has produced. For that reason I strive as manfully as I can to hold out a hand to them. I shall never tire of doing so. In the next book I intend to quote the Lord's own words on these questions, in the hope of convincing some of them by what Christ himself taught. May I succeed in persuading them to give up these errors and to stop blaspheming against their Creator, the only true God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

HIPPOLYTUS OF ROME

(†235)

Hippolytus may have been of eastern origin. He was ordained priest at Rome, where he set up in opposition to Pope Calixtus. He was reconciled to the Church before he died, in Sardinia, to which he had been deported during the persecution of Maximinus.

In addition to the 'Apostolic Tradition', which will be considered later, Hippolytus composed a treatise on Easter. This treatise inspired the Easter homilies from which the following two hymns are taken.

Easter Hymn

I

- 44 THIS is the paschal feast, the Lord's passing:
so cries the Spirit.

¹ The saint's prayer is made to the Father, who was revealed in the old Law as well as in the new. This idea of continuity in God's scheme of salvation, as it unfolds in the course of history, is a favourite one with Irenaeus. When he asks for the gift of the Spirit, he goes to the Father for it.

² The allusion is to some of the fabrications of the Gnostics.

No type or telling, this,
no shadow;
Pasch of the Lord it is, and truly.
The blood that is shed is a sign of the blood to be shed,
the first indication of what the Spirit will be,
a glimpse of the great anointing.
'I, seeing the blood, will protect you.' ¹

You have indeed protected us, Jesus,
from endless disaster.
You spread your hands like a Father
and fatherlike gave cover with your wings.
Your blood, a God's blood, you poured over the earth,
sealing a blood-bargain
for men because you loved them.
What anger threatened you turned away from us;
instead you gave us back God's friendship.

The heavens may have your spirit, paradise your soul,
but O may the earth have your blood.

This feast of the Spirit
leads the mystic dance through the year.
The pasch came from God, came from heaven to earth;
from earth it has gone back to heaven.
New is this feast and all-embracing;
all creation assembles at it.

Joy to all creatures, honour, feasting, delight.
Dark death is destroyed
and life is restored everywhere.
The gates of heaven are open.
God has shown himself man,
man has gone up to him a God.
The gates of hell God has shattered,
the bars of Adam's prison broken.
The people of the world below have risen from the dead,
bringing good news:
what was promised is fulfilled.
From the earth has come singing and dancing.

¹ Exod. 12:13.

This is God's passing,
Heaven's God, showing no meanness,
has joined us to himself in the Spirit.
The great marriage-hall is full of guests,
all dressed for the wedding, no guest rejected
for want of a wedding-dress.
The paschal light is the bright new lamp-light,
light that shines from the virgins' lamps.
The light in the soul will never go out.
The fire of grace burns in us all,
spirit, divine,
in our bodies and in our souls,
fed with the oil of Christ.

We pray you, God, our Sovereign, Christ,
King for ever in the world of spirits,
stretch out your strong hands over your holy Church
and over the people that will always be yours.
Defend, protect, preserve them,
fight and do battle for them,
subject their enemies to them,
subdue the invisible powers that oppose them,
as you have already subdued those that hate us.
Raise now the sign of victory over us
and grant
that we may sing with Moses the song of triumph.
For yours are victory and power
for ever and ever. Amen.

2

- 45 Do you honour God? Do you love him?
—here's the very feast for your pleasure.
Are you his servant, knowing his wishes?
—be glad with your Master, share his rejoicing.
Are you worn down with the labour of fasting?
—now is the time of your payment.

Have you been working since early morning?
—now you will be paid what is fair.
Have you been here since the third hour?
—you can be thankful, you will be pleased.

If you came at the sixth hour,
you may approach without fearing:
you will suffer no loss.
Did you linger till the ninth hour?
—come forward without hesitation.
What though you came at the eleventh hour?
—have no fear; it was not too late.

God is a generous Sovereign,
treating the last to come as he treats the first arrival.
He allows all his workmen to rest—
those who began at the eleventh hour,
those who have worked from the first.
He is kind to the late-comer
and sees to the needs of the early,
gives to the one and gives to the other:
honours the deed and praises the motive.

Join, then, all of you, join in our Master's rejoicing.
You who were the first to come, you who came after,
come and collect now your wages.
Rich men and poor men, sing and dance together.
You that are hard on yourselves, you that are easy,
honour this day.
You that have fasted and you that have not,
make merry today.

The meal is ready: come and enjoy it.
The calf is a fat one: you will not go hungry away.
There's kindness for all to partake of and kindness to spare.

Away with pleading of poverty:
the kingdom belongs to us all.
Away with bewailing of failings:
forgiveness has come from the grave.
Away with your fears of dying:
the death of our Saviour has freed us from fear.
Death played the master: he has mastered death . . .
The world below had scarcely known him in the flesh
when he rose and left it plunged in bitter mourning.

Isaías knew it would be so.
The world of shadows mourned, he cried, when it met you,
mourned at its bringing low, wept at its deluding.

The shadows seized a body and found it was God;
 they reached for earth and what they held was heaven;
 they took what they could see: it was what no one sees.
 Where is death's goad? Where is the shadows' victory?

Christ is risen: the world below is in ruins.
 Christ is risen: the spirits of evil are fallen.
 Christ is risen: the angels of God are rejoicing.
 Christ is risen: the tombs are void of their dead.
 Christ has indeed arisen from the dead,
 the first of the sleepers.

Glory and power are his for ever and ever. Amen.

CYPRIAN OF CARTHAGE

(†258)

Cyprian was born into a rich pagan family. He felt the promptings of grace when he was at the height of his brilliant career as a rhetorician at Carthage. As bishop, he had to govern the Church during the terrible persecution set on foot by Decius. He began writing as a means of fulfilling his pastoral obligations. The prayer that welled up spontaneously as he wrote has the same rhythm, compactness and sobriety as the Roman liturgy. His commentary on the Lord's Prayer will be found in a later section.

Prayer for All Needs

46 LET us pray to the Lord without duplicity, in tune with one another, entreating him with sighs and tears, as befits people in our position—placed as we are between the many, lamenting that they have fallen away, and the faithful remnant that fears it may do the same itself; between the weak, laid low in large numbers, and the few still standing firm.

Let us pray that peace may very soon be restored to us, help reach us in our dangers, to draw us from our dark retreats, and God's gracious promises to his servants find fulfilment.—May we see the Church restored and our salvation secured; after the rain, fair weather; after the darkness, light; after these storms and tempests, a gentle calm.

Let us ask him to help us, because he loves us as a Father loves his children, and to give us the tokens of his divine power that are usual with him. So will our persecutors be stopped from blaspheming, those who have fallen away repent to some purpose, and the firm, unwavering faith of the steadfast be crowned with glory.

Prayer in the Form of a Litany¹

- 47 LET us pray for those who have fallen away,
 that they may recover their footing.
 Let us pray for those standing firm,
 that they may not be tempted to their downfall.
 Let us pray for those of whose fall we have been told,
 that they may admit the gravity of their sin
 and realise that the remedy it calls for is anything but superficial.
 Let us pray that when they have received full forgiveness, they may do
 penance,
 and remembering their guilt, may decide to be patient for a time.
 The Church is still unsteady. May they not upset it altogether, its own
 members turning to persecution within it and crowning their many sins
 with the sin of trouble-making.

Moderation is particularly desirable in those who are blamed, among other things, for a tendency to interfere. By all means let them knock at the door, but they ought not to go so far as to break the door open. They may come to the threshold of the Church, but they ought not to rush inside. They may guard the gates of the camp with the rest of heaven's army; but if they remember that they have been deserters, they will take courtesy for their weapon.

They will do well to take up the trumpet again, but they should play hymns on it and not use it to give the signal for battle. They should fit themselves out with humility's weapons and pick up their shields—their faith—which they threw away when, through fear of dying, they denied what they believed in. They can then be sure that they are properly equipped to fight against our enemy, the Devil, and not against the Church that is still grieving over their defection. They will find it very useful to pray humbly, make their petitions with due respect and . . . be really patient. Their tears will be their ambassadors to tell of their grief; the sighs they fetch from their inmost hearts will plead in their defence and prove their sorrow and shame for the crime they have committed.

Prayer for Peace

- 48 WE beg and beseech the God whom the enemies of the Church are forever provoking and irritating that he would tame their wild hearts. May their rage subside and calm return to their hearts; may their minds, clouded by the darkness their sins produce, repent and see the light; may they seek the bishop's prayers and not his blood.

¹ This prayer anticipates the litanies found in the eastern liturgies, with their petitions about matters of general concern. There is a hint of them as early as the 'Martyrdom of St. Polycarp', chapter 8.

Prayer for Perseverance

49 YOUR prayers are more likely to be answered now, for it is easier to obtain what you ask when you are being persecuted. Beseech the good God, then, as earnestly as you can that we may all confess his name to the end, and that we too may emerge unscathed and glorious from the snares of this world and its darkness. As we have been linked together by charity and peace, and together have withstood persecution from the pagans, so may we rejoice together in the kingdom of heaven.

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA

(† before 215)

From the end of the second century there was a school at Alexandria, under ecclesiastical supervision, to prepare the younger members of the more cultivated Christian families in the Greek community for baptism. Clement and, later, Origen both taught in the city—Clement privately, Origen at the official school, where he introduced a course of advanced studies.

Coming of a pagan family, Clement had received the usual Greek education; he was also deeply grounded in Scripture. The aim of his book, the 'Paedagogus', was to put the new converts to school with the one and only master, Christ. The book ends with the famous hymn to Christ, which was perhaps the school-song of the 'school of Alexandria' (Altaner). The hymn is a work of enthusiasm, inspired by the Bible and Plato and preceded by a prayer to the Saviour in which, in the final doxology, the Father and the Holy Spirit are associated with the Son.

Prayer to the Divine Tutor

50 BE kind to your little children, Lord: that is what we ask of you as their Tutor, you the Father, Israel's Guide; Son, yes, but Father as well. Grant that by doing what you have told us to do, we may achieve a faithful likeness to the Image and, as far as is possible for us, may find in you a good God and a lenient Judge.

May we all live in the peace that comes from you. May we journey towards your city, sailing through the waters of sin untouched by the waves, borne tranquilly along by the Holy Spirit, your Wisdom beyond all telling. Night and day until the last day of all, may our praises give you thanks, our thanksgiving praise you: you who alone are both Father and Son, Son and Father, the Son who is our Tutor and our Teacher, together with the Holy Spirit.¹

¹ This is one of the earliest forms of Trinitarian doxology in ancient Christian literature. It shows the Spirit as one being with the Father and the Son, but his presence is not so

All things belong to the One. He it is who makes them exist and exist as one; he makes eternity and gives us all a share in his own life. To him be glory for ever.

All belongs to God, the good, the beautiful, the wise, the just.
To him be glory, now and age after age. Amen.

Hymn to Christ the Saviour

51 YOU who bridle colts untamed,
who wing unerring birds in flight,
who steer ships along their course
and shepherd the royal lambs,
gather together
your artless children
for honest praising,
guileless hymning
of Christ, the guide of his children.

King of the saints,
invincible Word
of the Father most High,
wisdom's Prince,
Ground of exertion,
eternal Joy;
Jesus, Saviour
of this mortal race,
you the Shepherd,
Cultivator,

marked in the body of the prayer. Clement there expresses the full intensity of his belief in the Father and the Son and his gratitude to them.

The same impetuous outpouring is found in a contemporary prayer ascribed to the dying apostle Peter by the apocryphal Acts of that saint:

You are a father and a mother to me, a brother, a friend, a servant; you manage my house for me;

you are all that is, and all that is in you; you are that which exists, and nothing else exists, save only you.

You too, brothers, should take refuge with him. When you have learned that you exist in him alone, the things of which you are told that 'no eye has seen, no ear has heard, no human heart conceived' them, will be yours.

We ask you for what you promised to give us, Jesus undefiled. We praise you and thank you; we give you glory, men though we are and weak; we acknowledge that you alone are God and that there is no other.

To him be glory, now and for all eternity. Amen.

you the Helmsman
and the Rider,
you the Wing that lifts to heaven
all the company of the saints;
Fisher of men:
them you came to deliver
from the waters of sin;
to fish untainted
by the envious sea
you cast the bait
of sweet fresh life.
Guide your flock
of spiritual sheep;
guide, holy King,
guide your unsullied children.
The prints of Christ's feet
show the way to heaven.

Word everlasting,
Age without end,
undying Light,
Fountain of mercy,
Doer of virtuous deeds,
exalted Life
of them that sing God's praises.

Jesus Christ,
celestial Milk out-pressed
from a young bride's fragrant breasts
(your Wisdom's graces),
your little children
with their tender mouths
slake their thirst there,
drink their fill
of the Spirit flowing
from those incorporeal nipples.

Let us together
sing simple praises,
true hymns
to Christ the King,
our blessed reward
(such is his life-giving teaching).

With hearts undivided
 let us sing to the Son in his might.
 Votaries of peace,
 we the Christ-born,
 people of wisdom,
 hymn we together
 the God of tranquillity.

ORIGEN

(†253)

It is beyond question that Origen represents the 'school of Alexandria' better than anybody else. He was born in Alexandria; his father was a Christian and died a martyr. He became head of the ecclesiastical school at a very early age and his lectures were extremely brilliant. His wonderful intellectual gifts were supplemented by deep faith and a mystical enthusiasm that led him to martyrdom.

Origen is the greatest theologian the Greek Church has produced. A centre of controversy during his lifetime and still more so after his death, he is much studied today. He combined an extensive secular culture with a quite remarkable knowledge of Scripture, which shows through his writings at every turn. He made a critical edition of the Bible and then commented on the text with a view to discovering its allegorical or spiritual meaning.

In addition to his treatise on prayer, long extracts from which will be found below, there are the prayers which end his commentaries and homilies. Prayer flowed out as he wrote his commentaries; it was generally addressed to Jesus, and its strongly individual note—the affection in it and the devotion to Christ that prompted it—was novel and anticipated Bernard of Clairvaux and Francis of Assisi. Some of his ideas have had their day, but the essential part of his achievement still seems astonishingly alive.

SERMON ENDINGS¹

Noe's Ark and the Flood

52 GOD can do anything. Let us beg him to take pity on us and make us not merely listen to what he tells us but do it as well. May he send the flood of his waters over our souls, destroy in us what he knows is in need of destruction and give life to what he considers should live, through Christ our Lord and his Holy Spirit.

To him be glory, age after age, for all eternity. Amen.

¹ The doxologies at the end of the homilies are generally addressed to Christ; the Father is sometimes mentioned, but the Holy Spirit and the Trinity as a whole hardly ever.

The homilies from which these extracts are taken were delivered at Caesarea.

The Circumcision of Abraham a Sign of the Covenant

- 53 THE Lord grant that we may believe in our hearts, declare with our mouths and prove by our deeds that his covenant with us has been sealed in our flesh. May men see that what we do is good and praise our Father in heaven for it, through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom glory will be given throughout eternity.

The Opening of Agar's Eyes

- 54 LET us be on the watch and say with the prophet: 'Never shall these eyes have sleep, these eyelids close, until I have found the Lord a home, the great God of Jacob a dwelling-place.'

His are glory and power, his they will be throughout the endless succession of ages. Amen.

God says to Jacob: 'Joseph shall lay his hands on your eyes'.

- 55 MAY the Lord Jesus put his hands on our eyes also, for then we too shall begin to look not at what is seen but at what is not seen.

May he open the eyes that are concerned not with the present but with what is yet to come; may he unseal the heart's vision, that we may gaze on God in the spirit, through the same Lord, Jesus Christ, whose glory and power will endure throughout the unending succession of ages. Amen.

The Spiritual Understanding of God's Law

- 56 WE should ask God and the Holy Spirit¹ graciously to dispel every shred of those clouds and vapours, the product of our filthy sins, which with their darkness impede our hearts' vision. Then we shall be able to understand the spirit of his Law and the marvels of it: which was what the prophet meant when he said: 'Clear sight be mine, to contemplate the wonders of thy law.'

Knowledge of Scripture

- 57 LET us keep the Scriptures in mind and meditate upon them day and night, persevering in prayer, always on the watch. Let us beg the Lord to give us real knowledge of what we read and to show us not only how to understand it but how to put it into practice, so that we may deserve to obtain spiritual grace, enlightened by the law of the Holy Spirit, through Jesus Christ our Lord, whose power and glory will endure throughout the ages. Amen.

¹ This prayer is an exception to our rule, in that it comes at the beginning of a homily and not at the end.

Spiritual Understanding of Scripture

- 58 LET us ask the Lord to broaden our ideas, make them clearer and bring them nearer to the truth, that we may understand the other things too that he has revealed to his prophets. May we study the Holy Spirit's writings under the guidance of the Spirit himself and compare one spiritual interpretation with another, so that our explanation of the texts may be worthy of God and the Holy Spirit, who inspired them. May we do this through Christ Jesus, our Lord, to whom glory and power belong and will belong through all the ages. Amen.

For Peace of Mind

- 59 LET us pray that Jesus may reign over us and that our land may be at peace—i.e., that our bodies may be free from the assaults of fleshly desires. When these have ceased, we shall be able to rest, beneath our vines, our fig-trees and our olives.

Father, Son and Holy Spirit will shelter us as we rest, our peace of mind and body once recovered.

Glory to God the eternal, age after age. Amen.

To Bid Jesus Welcome

- 60 LET us have clean hearts ready inside us for the Lord Jesus, so that he will be glad to come in, gratefully accepting the hospitality of those worlds, our hearts: he whose glory and power will endure throughout the ages. Amen.

Loyalty Amid Trials

- 61 LET us beg the Lord with all our hearts that we may fight for the truth body and soul to the very end. If circumstances arise that put our faith to the test (for our faith is tested in danger and persecution, just as gold is tested in the furnace), and even if persecution breaks out, may he find us ready. Otherwise, our houses might fall in that winter; the building might be blown down by the storms, as though it had been built on sand.

When the Devil, the worst of the wicked spirits, blows with his winds, may our conduct stand up to him, as it has until now—unless it has been covertly undermined—and by preparing ourselves for the campaign, may we show what love we have for God and Christ Jesus, to whom glory and power belong and will belong for ever and ever. Amen.¹

¹ This prayer, with its absorption in the thought of martyrdom, is especially moving when read in the light of Origen's own history. His whole life was coloured by the persecutions. His father died a martyr. He himself was put in prison during the savage persecution of Decius. There he was tortured atrociously and he died, at Tyre, in consequence of his injuries, as he had prayed might happen.

The Example of Simeon

62 LET us too stand in the Temple and hold God's Son and embrace him; and that we may deserve leave to withdraw and start on our way towards a better land, let us pray to God, the all-powerful, and to the little Jesus himself, whom we so much want to speak to and hold in our arms.

His are glory and power now and always. Amen.

PRAYERS FROM THE COMMENTARIES

'Who, then, will cleanse me? Who will wash my feet?'

63 JESUS, my feet are dirty. Come and slave for me; pour your water into your basin and come and wash my feet. I am overbold, I know, in asking this, but I dread what you threatened when you said: 'If I do not wash your feet, it means you have no companionship with me.' Wash my feet, then, because I do want to have companionship with you. And yet, why am I saying: 'Wash my feet'? It was all very well for Peter to say that, for in his case all that needed washing was his feet: he was clean through and through. My position is quite different: you may wash me now, but I shall still need that other washing you were thinking of, Lord, when you said: 'There is a baptism I must needs be baptised with.'¹

*'Rebellious children, come back to me,
and I will heal your wounds'*

64 NOTICE how God urges us to go back to him—not just a little way but all the way—promising us that if we go back, right back, to him, he will heal our wounds, through Jesus Christ. And we, in turn, not postponing or delaying our salvation, say in reply, as Israel did: 'See, we will be your servants.'

When God said: 'Come back, rebellious children, and I will heal your wounds,' the nations replied: 'We will be your servants. We were servants before, though not yours: we served demons and powers opposed to you.'

'When you divided up the nations, mighty Sovereign, you did not choose us for your portion; we were not included with Jacob's people in the part you allotted to yourself: we fell to the lot of others. Yet now that you have said: "Come back, rebellious children, and I will heal your wounds," in others' portions though we have been, we still reply: "We will be yours."

¹ It is all the more remarkable that this prayer is addressed to Jesus in that Origen's habitual concern was to refer all worship and prayer to the Father, as being the principle of the godhead. Cf. 'De Oratione', 15 and 16.

All that we were waiting for was to be asked. Some were invited and made excuses, but we are not like them: you have asked us and we have not excused ourselves.

'We are told in the parable in the gospels that of those who were invited before, one said: "I have got married, and so I must ask you to excuse me"; and another: "I have bought five pair of oxen, and I am on my way to try them out: do accept my apologies." But we made no such excuses when you summoned us from paganism. How could we? What fields have we to bother about? What woman can attract any of us? What else is there to occupy our attention at all?'

God has said to us too: 'Come back, rebellious children, and I will heal your wounds.' When we consider our wounds and his promise to heal them, our answer comes at once. 'We will be yours,' we say, 'because you are ours—our Lord and our God.' We yield to his wishes and tell him: 'We will be yours.'

Let us remind ourselves that by telling him we will be his servants, we make ourselves his subjects. And since we have told him that we will be his, let us not give ourselves to any other power—to the spirits of anger, sadness or evil desire, to the Devil or to his angels. No, we have heard his summons and have made our answer: 'See, we will be yours.'

Since we have declared that we are his, let us prove by our conduct that we have no other master but him. 'You, Lord,' we must tell him, 'are our God.' And indeed we do not acknowledge any other god—not our stomachs, like the gluttonous, who worship their bellies; not money, like the miserly, or covetousness, which is a kind of idolatry. We make a god of nothing, we deify no creature. . . . Our God is above all things, pervades all things and is in all things. Our only attachment is to charity, for that binds us to God; in fact, it rivets us to him. 'We will be yours,' we say, 'because you are ours—our Lord and our God.'

The Wounds Love Left Me With¹

- 65 IF your wounds are inflicted by love, that is a fine thing, that is as it should be. In some cases, the weapon that makes its way in is carnal love; in others, the injury comes from the love of what is earthly. But in your case, the arrow is a thing of beauty, for God is the archer. You have only to bare your flesh and yield.

Listen to what Scripture has to say about this arrow, or rather, listen to the arrow itself: that will compel your admiration the more. 'I am an

¹ This and the following piece are given by way of example, although they are rather meditations than prayers properly so called.

arrow,' it says, 'that he has chosen out carefully and kept in his quiver. He told me, too, that it was a great privilege for me to be called his servant.' ¹

Ponder on the arrow's words and try to realise how it has been specially chosen by God. What a blessing it is to have that arrow wound you, as the three apostles had who said to one another: 'Were not our hearts burning within us when he spoke to us on the road, and when he made the Scriptures plain to us?'

All Mine, My True Love, and I All His

66 'I WILL come and live in them and walk up and down in them,' this King says. He is thinking of those who open their hearts wide to God's Word—for then he can aptly be said to walk up and down in them: the paths of a broadened mind and a fuller knowledge are spacious enough to allow it.

In the same sense, he is said to lie down in the soul, if it is like the one the Lord himself speaks of in the prophecy where he says: 'To whom shall I look for rest but to the humble and quiet, the man who stands in awe of my words?'

This King, then, who is God's Word, takes to resting in a soul when once it has come within sight of perfection—when it has no serious blemish but is really devoted to him and amply provided with piety, faith, charity, peace and all the other virtues. That was the kind of soul the Lord had in mind when he said: 'My Father and I will come to supper with him and make our home with him.' And if Christ brings his Father to supper in a place and makes his home in it, why should he not lie down there as well?

Boons indeed the expansive heart and receptive mind, if that is where the Father and the Son lie down with the Holy Spirit, eat their supper and make their home, as I am sure it is. The food they eat must be choice and plentiful. What do you suppose it is? Peace is the first course; humility is served, with patience, forbearance and gentleness, as well as purity of heart, which they consider a very great delicacy; but the principal dish at the meal is charity.

METHODIUS OF OLYMPUS

(†c. 311)

Not much is known about Methodius. He lived at Olympus, in Asia Minor, and was an opponent of Origen. Of his works, the only one to survive in anything like a complete state is the 'Symposium of the Ten Virgins', a book in praise of virginity. Both the title and the literary genre show the influence of Plato. The book concludes with a hymn in which, with every mark of the warmest affection, the virgins offer their purity as a tribute to Christ and his spotless bride, the Church.

¹ Is. 49:2, 6 (LXX).

*The Virgins' Hymn to Christ**Antiphon*

67 MY purity intact for you, my lamp alight in my hand,
Bridegroom, I come out to meet you.

Psalm 1

That cry from the heights, virgins,
could have wakened the dead.
'Out to the Bridegroom together,' it said;
'take your lamps and white dresses;
make for the east.
Wake up, or else the King
will be indoors before you.'

Antiphon

My purity intact for you, my lamp alight in my hand,
Bridegroom, I come out to meet you.

Psalm 2

Not for me the pale joys,
the pleasures, loves, of an existence
fed with mortal pleasure.
I long for you to take me in your arms
and give me life;
I want to look at you for ever,
my Blessed One, my Beauty.

Antiphon

My purity intact for you, my lamp alight in my hand,
Bridegroom, I come out to meet you.

Psalm 3

Men offered me their beds: I scorned them;
scorned their houses too.
For you, my golden King,
I come in this fresh white dress.
I cannot wait to go inside that blissful place
and be with you.

Antiphon

My purity intact for you, my lamp alight in my hand,
Bridegroom, I come out to meet you.

Psalm 5

I have forgotten the land I was born in,
so deep your grace absorbs me, Word.
I have no heart for friendly girls and dances,
I no more care who my forebears were.
You, Christ, you, are all in all to me.

Antiphon

My purity intact for you, my lamp alight in my hand,
Bridegroom, I come out to meet you.

Psalm 6

Joy to you, Christ, Master of life's ballet,
Light of our days, undimmed at evening.
The virgins acclaim you; take what they bring you:
Flower of all flowers, our Love, our Joy,
Understanding, Wisdom, Word.

Antiphon

My purity intact for you, my lamp alight in my hand,
Bridegroom, I come out to meet you.

Psalm 7

Stand by the open doors,
queen in the glittering gown;
bid us too welcome to the marriage-room.
Virgin your body, bride,
splendid your victory,
sweet the scent of your breath.
See us now beside Christ,
dressed like you, ready to celebrate
your marriage, blest branch of God's olive.

Antiphon

My purity intact for you, my lamp alight in my hand,
Bridegroom, I come out to meet you.

Psalm 11

Clear the colours Abel used
to paint your death before you died,
my Blessed.
Down streamed his blood,
his eyes sought heaven, as he said:
'My brother's hand has made this cruel wound.
Take me, Word, I beseech you.'

Antiphon

My purity intact for you, my lamp alight in my hand,
Bridegroom, I come out to meet you.

Psalm 17

John washed the crowds in the cleansing waters:
you were to wash them too.
A bad man sent him undeserved to death,
for purity.
Blood drenched the dust, but still he cried to you:

Antiphon

My purity intact for you, my lamp alight in my hand,
Bridegroom, I come out to meet you.

Psalm 18

The mother, my Life, that bore you
stood firm and fast in your grace.
The womb that held you, spotless Germ,
no man had sown with his seed.
Virgin she was, though seeming to betray
the marriage-bed. Big with her blissful fruit she said:

Antiphon

My purity intact for you, my lamp alight in my hand,
Bridegroom, I come out to meet you.

*Hymn to the Church**Psalm 20*

We the bridesmaids
sing your praises,
happy woman, bride of God,
virgin still, Ecclesia.
Snow your body is, dark the waves of your hair,
sound, unblemished, lovely creature.

Antiphon

My purity intact for you, my lamp alight in my hand,
Bridegroom, I come out to meet you.

Psalm 21

Decay is destroyed; disease,
with its pain and its tears, has gone.

Death is no more, folly has fled
and grief, that gnaws the mind,
is dead. A sudden shaft of joy
from Christ our God,
and now this mortal world is shining.

Antiphon

My purity intact for you, my lamp alight in my hand,
Bridegroom, I come out to meet you.

Psalm 23

So with a song that is new
the band of virgins takes you up to heaven,
bright queen.
Wreathed with white lily-buds they go,
the lamps in their hands ablaze with light.

Antiphon

My purity intact for you, my lamp alight in my hand,
Bridegroom, I come out to meet you.

Psalm 24

Blest Father, beginning never,
holding all things ever
in strength together,
taking the spotless heavens for your home:
may we too pass beyond the gates of life,
welcomed by you, O Father, and your Son.

Antiphon

My purity intact for you, my lamp alight in my hand,
Bridegroom, I come out to meet you.

2

Prayers of the Martyrs

The Acts of the Apostles gives us the last prayer of the first of the Church's martyrs. The Letters of St. Ignatius are the saint's expression of his love, in all its purity, just before he gave the testimony of his blood. The Acts of the Martyrs in turn have preserved—true, sometimes, to the letter—many of the prayers made by Christians as they went to their death, especially during the great persecutions of Diocletian and Decius.

The prayers of the martyrs (the shorter they are, the more likely they are to be authentic) are addressed, as a rule, to the Father but often, too, to Christ, as was the case with the deacon Stephen, the first martyr—the only true martyr, the confessors of Lyons called him, the only Witness to God.

Besides praising God and thanking him, the witnesses to the faith call in their prayers for God's help at the critical moment. They ask him to put their sins out of his mind, to forgive their executioners and to strengthen the faith of their brethren. Then they resign their souls into their Father's hands.

What makes these prayers so moving is that they are essentially the expression given in the imminence of death to a faith soon to be sealed with blood.

POLYCARP OF SMYRNA

(†c. 156)

St. Polycarp died at the stake at the age of eighty-six. His martyrdom is described in a letter from the Church of Smyrna to the faithful at Philomelion, and half-way through the account the words of his last prayer are given.

It is a solemn prayer, inspired by Scripture and addressed to God the Father through Christ, his 'beloved Child'. It contains many characteristically Johannine touches and in tone anticipates that great doxology, the Gloria.

As he stood at the stake, Polycarp was reminded of the sacrifice he used to offer in the midst of his priests: reminiscences of the liturgy are scattered throughout his prayer.

Prayer At The Stake

They did not nail him to the stake: they simply tied him up. With his hands bound together behind his back he stood there, like some splendid ram chosen out of a

vast flock for the sacrifice, ready to be made into a burnt offering, acceptable to God. Looking up to heaven, he said:

68 LORD God almighty, Father of Jesus Christ, that dear Child of yours, through whom we have come to know you, God of the angels and powers, God of all creation, God of the race that lives in your presence, the race of the just.

I bless you because you have thought me worthy of this day and hour,¹ worthy to be numbered among the martyrs and to drink out of the cup your Anointed has drunk from, so to rise and live for ever, body and soul, in the incorruptibility that is the Holy Spirit's.

May I be admitted with them to your presence today, a satisfying, welcome sacrifice. You have made my life a preparation for this; you showed me that this was to be and now you have brought it about, like the veracious and truthful God that you are. For this and all your blessings I praise you and give you glory, through the eternal high priest, Jesus Christ the heavenly, your dear Child.

He is with you and the Holy Spirit. Through him may glory be given you now and in the ages to come. Amen.

Carpus, Papyrus and Agathonike²

Standing at the stake, Papyrus raised his eyes heavenward and said:

69 LORD Jesus Christ, receive my soul.

And he yielded up his soul.

Carpus was fastened to the post. As the flames began to burn him, he gave a loud shout and said:

Blessing to you, Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God: you have thought me fit to share this fate with you, sinner though I am.

So saying, he yielded up his soul.

When Agathonike's turn for the stake came, she said:

Lord, Lord, Lord, come to my help; I turn to you for refuge.

¹ This reference to the day and hour recalls John 12:27.

² Carpus was a bishop, Papyrus a deacon, Agathonike a married woman and the mother of a family. They were martyred at Pergamum, in Asia Minor, under Marcus Aurelius. The account of their sufferings comes from eye-witnesses.

Lucian and Marcian¹

70 WE offer you our poor praises, Lord Jesus, because you have defended us—sorry, undeserving creatures though we are—from the errors of paganism and in your mercy have brought us to these supreme sufferings, which it is such a privilege to undergo for the honour of your name, and have given us a share in the glory of your saints.

Praise to you, and glory. To you we commend our souls and our spirits.

Pionius of Smyrna²

Pionius and Metrodorus turned their eyes, and their hearts as well, towards the east. Pionius closed his eyes and, praying silently, asked God for rest. Then he looked at the fire. His face shone with joy and he said:

71 AMEN.

Then:

Lord, receive my soul.

Cyprian of Carthage

*After this preamble, the proconsul read out his sentence from the tablet: 'Our decision is that Thascius Cyprianus shall die by the sword.'*³ *Bishop Cyprian said:*

72 DEO gratias (God be thanked).

Rogatian and Donatian of Nantes

It was a great grief to the blessed Rogatian that he had been arrested before he had received the grace of baptism;⁴ but his faith was so strong that he thought a kiss from his brother, who was a Catholic, would do instead. When the blessed Donatian realised this, he prayed to the Lord for his brother, saying:

73 LORD Jesus Christ, when the wish is heartfelt, you take it for the deed. Where the obstacle to its realisation is simply lack of power to carry it out,

¹ Two martyrs who were arrested during the persecution of Decius and martyred at Nicomedia, the capital of Bithynia, in Asia Minor, c. 250.

² Pionius lived at Smyrna. He was a cultivated person and a priest. He died with Metrodorus, at a very advanced age, on the 25th of February, 250.

³ Records are extant of the two examinations which prepared the way for Bishop Cyprian's condemnation to death. For Cyprian's prayers, see nos. 46-49.

⁴ Donatian and Rogatian were brothers. Rogatian was still unbaptised when he was arrested.

we can be sure that the mere intention is sufficient: you have given us the ability to choose what we would like to do, but the power to do it is yours alone. May the pure faith of your servant Rogatian count, then, as though it were the gift of baptism; and if the governor is inflexible and puts us tomorrow to the sword, may the shedding of his blood be to him like the sacrament of his anointing.¹

*Euplus*²

74 THANK you, Christ, for this. Take care of me, because it is for you that I am suffering. I worship the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. I worship the holy Trinity, apart from whom there is no God. Perish the gods; they had not the power to make heaven and earth and the things that are in them. . . .

Thank you, Christ, for this. Take care of me, Christ, because it is for you that I am suffering.

Because he was full of the Holy Spirit, he burst into song. And he sang:

Great the glory, Lord, that you receive from those of your servants whom in your mercy you have summoned to you.

He prayed, too, for those who were following him, saying:

Lord, protect your servants: stay with them to the end, and then they will be able to glorify your name for all eternity.

He quickened his pace, for victory was near and at any moment now he would receive the crown. Then, stretching out his hands towards heaven, he said:

Thanks be to you, Lord Jesus Christ: your strength has been my consolation; you have not allowed my soul to perish with the wicked; you have given me your grace, the grace of your name. Now is the time for you to consolidate what you have achieved in me and so to confound the Adversary's impudence.

Then, looking at the people, he said:

Listen, dear brothers. Pray to God and fear him with all your hearts; for those that fear him he keeps in mind while they are in this world, and when they leave it, angels will come to meet them and take them to his holy city, Jerusalem.

And when he had finished what he had to say, he knelt down, bared his neck and was beheaded.

¹ An allusion to the anointing at baptism.

² Euplus was a deacon. His martyrdom took place at Catania, in Sicily, c. 304.

Theodotus of Ancyra and the Seven Virgins¹

75 LORD Jesus Christ, you created heaven and earth; you never forsake those who put their trust in you.

Thanks be to you: you have made us fit to live in your city in heaven and share your kingdom.

Thanks be to you: you have enabled me to master the dragon and crush its head.

Give your servants rest; turn the violence of their enemies on to me.

Give your Church peace;² deliver it from the tyranny of the Devil.

Genesius of Rome³

Though he had been stretched on the rack, long tormented and torn with the claws, and burnt with torches into the bargain, he still stood firm in confessing the faith, saying:

76 THERE is no King but him whom I have seen; he it is that I worship and adore. Were I to be killed a thousand times for my allegiance to him, I should still go on as I have begun, I should still be his man. Christ is on my lips, Christ is in my heart; no torments can ever take him from me. I am very sorry for the mistake I made in sneering at the holy name in holy men and coming so late to worship the true King, thinking I knew better than to be a soldier of his.

Felix of Tibiucca⁴

The proconsul decreed that he should die by the sword.

In firm tones Felix said:

77 THANKS be to you, Lord. How merciful it is of you to give me this release.

On reaching the place where he was to die, Bishop Felix looked up to heaven and said in a steady voice:

O God, thanks be to you.

I have spent fifty-six years in this world. I have kept myself a virgin,

¹ Theodotus was martyred with seven virgins at Ancyra, in Asia Minor, under Diocletian, c. 302.

² The martyrs are continually thinking of the Church—of their own brethren in the first place and then of the whole community.

³ Genesius had been an actor at Rome. It was said that he was visited by grace while he was acting a parody of martyrdom. He is supposed to have been martyred under Diocletian, c. 285.

⁴ Felix was Bishop of Tibiucca, in Africa. He was martyred c. 304.

followed the gospel, preached the faith and taught nothing but the truth. Lord God of heaven and earth—Jesus Christ—I bow my neck to you in sacrifice, to you, the ever enduring.

Glory and majesty are yours and always will be, throughout the ages. Amen.

Irenaeus of Sirmium¹

God's holy martyr gave thanks, saying:

78 THANKS be to you, Lord Jesus Christ: in all my trials and sufferings you have given me the strength to stand firm; in your mercy you have granted me a share of eternal glory.

And lifting his hands to heaven, he prayed, saying:

Lord Jesus Christ, your mercy made you suffer to save the world. May your heavens open for angels to receive the spirit of your servant Irenaeus, who is suffering now for your sake and for all who owe their life to your Catholic Church of Sirmium. Be so good, I beg and implore you, merciful Lord, as to take me to yourself and to strengthen them in their faith.

The Martyrs of Abitine²

Thelica ran out to be martyred, full of joy. They put the iron claws on him and tore his flesh. He said:

79 DEO gratias (God be thanked). Christ, Son of God, by the power of your name deliver your servants.

His blood flowed and his prayers flowed with it. He asked the Lord to forgive his executioners, whom he reproached (and the proconsul too) for their cruelty, saying:

God most high, do not regard these deeds of theirs as sins. . . . You should do what the Most High God commands. You are being unjust, poor men; you are torturing the innocent—we are not murderers, we have committed no fraud.

God, have pity on them. . . . For your name's sake, Lord, give me the strength to bear what I have to bear. Deliver your servants from the prison of this world. Thanks be to you. I cannot thank you, God, enough.

¹ Irenaeus was Bishop of Sirmium, in Hungary. He was martyred under Diocletian, c. 304.

² Abitine is a town in North Africa. The martyrs died there c. 304.

As the blood flowed, the proconsul said to him: 'You will soon see what you have to suffer.'

He replied:

It is for the glory of God. I thank God for it, the God of all royal power. The eternal kingdom is in sight, the kingdom that knows no corruption. Lord Jesus Christ, we are Christians, we are your servants; you are our hope, the hope of Christians. God most holy, God most high, God almighty: we praise you, we praise your name.

After Thelica, came the senator Dativus. He repeated over and over again the prayer:

O Lord Christ, let me have no cause for shame.

He was subjected to the most barbarous of tortures, and all the time he prayed:

I beg you, Christ, let me have no cause for shame.

When they put him on the rack, he paid no attention to the pain in his body but prayed to the Lord, saying:

Help me, Christ, I beg you; have pity on me. Keep my soul safe. . . . Let me have no cause for shame. I beg you, Christ, give me the strength to bear what I have to bear.

The priest Saturninus suffered horribly. His flesh was so badly torn that the bones were visible. And while the executioners went on with their work, he said:

Listen to me, Christ, I beg you. O God, thanks be to you. Tell them to behead me. I beg you, Christ, have pity on me. Son of God, help me.

Emeritus suffered similar tortures and prayed in much the same way:

I beg you, Christ, accept my praises. Deliver me, Christ: it is for your sake that I am suffering. I have only a short time to suffer; I am glad to suffer, Lord Christ. May I have no cause for shame.

Ampelius said:

Praise to you, Christ. Listen to me, Christ.

And the young Saturninus:

I beg you, Christ, give me the strength to bear what I have to bear. I trust in you to give me life.

*Afra of Augsburg*¹

80 LORD God almighty, Jesus Christ, you did not come to call the just; you came to call sinners to repentance.

Your promise is clear; it admits of no doubt. You were so good as to say that as soon as a sinner turned away from his evil deeds, you would say no more about his sins. Accept, then, as a sign of my repentance, the sufferings I am now undergoing, and by this fire that is waiting to burn my body for a time, deliver me from the eternal fire that burns body and soul alike . . .

Thanks be to you, Lord Jesus Christ: in your mercy you have chosen me to be a victim for the glory of your name—you who offered yourself on the cross as a victim for the salvation of the whole world, you the innocent for us the guilty, you the good for us the wicked, you the blessed for us the cursed, you the sinless for all us sinners.

To you I offer my sacrifice, to you who are one God with the Father and the Holy Spirit, with whom you live and reign, as you always will, age after age. Amen.

*Boniface of Tarsus*²

81 LORD, Lord almighty, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, I am your servant; come to my help. Send me your angel; take my soul and give it peace. That will stop the foul dragon with his reek of blood from blocking my way; no malice of his will then obstruct my soul, none of his stratagems will deceive me.

Give me rest in the company of your martyrs; save your people, too, Lord, from oppression by the godless. For it is fitting that you should have honour, you and your only Son and the Holy Spirit, throughout the ages. Amen.

*Severus of Thrace*³

He knelt down and prayed to the Lord, saying:

82 TO all who are tossed by the waves, you are the calm of the harbour; you are the hope of the hopeful.

¹ We know that Afra was a martyr and that she died under Diocletian, c. 302; but apart from that, we have little information about her. According to her Passion, which was written much later, she had lived a dissolute life and had afterwards mended her ways.

² Boniface, like St. Paul, came from Tarsus, in Asia Minor. He died in 306.

³ Severus was a priest at Heraclea, in Thrace (Greece). He died c. 304. This prayer may have come from a very old Ritual. It was not prayed by the martyr in the form in which we have it.

You are the health of the sick, you relieve the needy and guide the blind.
To those exposed to punishment on every count you are merciful, to the
weary a wall, in darkness light.

You created the land, you rule the sea, you set every element in its place;
a word from you and the heavens, the stars and all else was made, and
made perfect.

You kept Noe safe and gave wealth to Abraham,
let Isaac go free and provided a victim in his stead,
wrestled with Jacob, to his sweet confusion,
took Lot away from the accursed land of Sodom.

Moses you let see you; to Jesus, son of Nun, you gave prudence.

In your mercy you went with Joseph on his way and brought your people
out of the land of Egypt, leading them to the land they had been promised.

You protected the three children in the furnace: your dew, Majesty, flowed
over them and the flames could not touch them.

You closed the lions' mouths, gave life, gave food to Daniel.

You did not allow Jonas to perish in the depths of the sea, and when the
cruel sea-beast caught him in its jaws, you let him escape unhurt.

You gave Judith the weapons she needed; Susanna you saved from the
unjust judges.

Esther had her triumph from you; you procured the downfall of Aman.

You brought us from darkness to eternal light, Father of our Lord and
Saviour, Jesus Christ, light yourself unquenchable, you who gave me the
sign of the cross, the sign of Christ.

I beg you not to decide, Lord, that I am unworthy of these sufferings that
my brethren have been allowed to undergo. Let me share the crown with
them; let me be with them in glory, as I have been with them in prison.
Let me rest with them, as I have confessed your glorious name with them.

Simeon and the Persian Martyrs¹

Simeon began to pray. He said:

- 83 GIVE me this crown, Lord; you know how I long for it, for I have loved
you with all my heart and all my being. When I see you, I shall be filled
with joy and you will give me rest. I shall no longer have to live in this
world and see my people suffering, your churches destroyed, your altars
overthrown, your devoted clergy everywhere persecuted, the weak defiled,
the lukewarm turned from the truth, and my flock that was so large reduced
at the time of testing to a handful.

¹ Simeon bar Sabba'e was Bishop of Seleucia, in Persia. He and his companions died
in the persecution set on foot by Sapor, between 339 and 344.

I shall not see the many that seemed to be my friends undergo an inward change, become hostile and seek my death; or find those that were my friends for a while taken from me by persecution, at the very time when the killers are snapping their fingers at our people and lording it over them.

Yet I mean to persevere in my vocation like a hero and to walk bravely along the path marked out for me, so that I shall still be an example to all your people in the east. I have had the first place at table, I will have the first place too when it comes to dying; I will be the first to give my blood. Then with my brethren I shall enter on that life in which there are no cares, no anxiety, no solicitude, a life where there is neither persecutor nor persecuted, neither oppressor nor oppressed, neither tyrant nor victim of tyranny. No threatening kings, no blustering prefects shall I see there. No one there will cite me before his tribunal or upset me with repeated menaces; there will be no one to do me violence or bully me.

I shall stumble no more, when once I have gained a firm footing in you, the Way we all must walk in. My weary limbs will find their rest in you, for you, Anointed, are the Oil that is to anoint us. The grief in my heart will be forgotten when I drink of you, the Chalice of our salvation. The tears in my eyes you will wipe away, O Joy, O Consolation.

2

Gustazad, the chief of the king's eunuchs, who had at first apostatised but later returned to the faith, was martyred on Holy Thursday. When he reached the place where he was to die, he turned to the east, knelt down and said:

84 PRAISE to you, Lord Jesus: I was a lost sheep, and you brought me back; I had strayed from your holy fold, and by the exertions of that most capable of your shepherds, Simeon, you found out where I was.

He went out to look for me, and he put me with those of your sheep that had been fattened for the slaughter. I was to be a son to the apostles, a brother to the martyrs who had received the garland in the west, a good example to your people in the east.

Let them not fall away, let them not lose the true faith—faith in Father, Son and Holy Spirit, the truly Existing, the glorious King, whom all that worship the Holy Trinity, in heaven and on earth, confess and ever will confess, age after age. Amen.

3

When he heard the news of Gustazad's martyrdom, Simeon was transfigured. His face glowed like a red rose. He said to them all: 'Tomorrow, the day of Christ's passion, I too shall be put to death.' Then he said:

85 RISE, 'friends, rejoice we in the Lord's honour; cry we out merrily to God,

our strength and deliverer' (Ps. 94:1), because he has saved his servant Gustazad from death and snatched him from the grasp of hell. 'With praises court his presence' (Ps. 94:2), for in his mercy he has promptly come to his aid, delivered him from the power of error, freed him from the evil spirits' yoke, removed him from the gloom and darkness that Satan casts about, brought him back to the light from which he came, and set him down in the kingdom of Jesus, your Son, from which he had been cast out. The portion he has been honoured with is that which falls to the saints in the place where light is.

'Come,' *Bishop Simeon said*, 'let us give ourselves the joy of commemorating him. Let us link his passing with the Pasch¹ of Jesus Christ; let us receive the body and blood of the Lamb, the Living One, who takes the world's sins away and shows us in these mysteries the mystery of his own immolation: his body is sacrificed now not by the Jews but by his own holy servants, in the Church.' *He celebrated the holy mysteries, and he said:*

'May this mystery of the Lord's body bear us company until the day of his manifestation, when he is to come from the sky on clouds, with his army of holy angels, to raise our bodies from the dust and restore our souls to them, to take us up to heaven with him and fill us with delight at the sight of him, to give us a share in his glory and a cause for rejoicing in the kingdom of heaven for ever. Amen.'

Simeon's Prayer Before His Martyrdom

86 LORD Jesus, you prayed for those who had crucified you and you taught us too to pray for our enemies. Stephen, your deacon, prayed for the people who had stoned him, and you received his spirit. Receive as well the souls of our brethren, receive my spirit with them. Set us among the martyrs who have received the garland in the west, among the holy apostles and the blessed prophets. Do not count it as a sin that these men persecute your people and kill our bodies, but grant them, Lord, the grace of conversion. May they come to know that you are God and realise that you are the Lord.

Bless, Lord, the towns and cities in the east which you entrusted to my care. Protect all the faithful of these lands as you would the apple of your own eye. May they find shelter under the shadow of your wings until these troubles are over. Stay with them until the consummation of the world, as you promised that you would.

Bless, Lord, this city, the city of our capture and our crowning. May your cross keep it true to the faith, now and for ever, age after age. Amen.

¹ Etymologically, the word 'pasch' means 'passing'. Like the death of Christ, the martyrdom of Gustazad was a 'passing' from the earth to eternal life.

*Prayers to the Martyrs*¹

87 TRULY fearless, truly fortunate martyrs, called and chosen to glorify our Lord Jesus Christ! If any man magnifies the Lord, honours and adores him, these are the models for him. If he reads about them, he will find that though they are modern, they are not inferior to the ancient ones: they will edify the Church just as much. These new examples of virtue will prove that it is one and the same Holy Spirit who was active then and is active now, one and the same omnipotent God the Father and his Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, whose glory and power are boundless and always will be, age after age. Amen.

2

88 HAPPY the martyrs, tried in the fire and found to be of worth, like gold. Faith was the breast-plate, salvation the helmet each was equipped with. Unfading the wreaths and garlands that crown them, because they have crushed the Devil's head.

Happy the martyrs, whose merits have won them a place of honour in heaven, where they stand at Christ's right hand, blessing God the almighty Father and our Lord Jesus Christ, his Son.

The Lord has taken his martyrs to himself and given them peace, because their witness was as it should have been.

His are honour and glory, his will they be for ever, age after age. Amen.

¹ These prayers, taken, like the preceding extracts, from the Acts of the Martyrs, are given here because they illustrate the confidence and trust that Christians had in the confessors of the faith at a very early date and the cultus they paid to them. The first, which may be by Tertullian, is interesting because of its Trinitarian doxology. Cf. P. de Labriolle, 'Tertullien, auteur du prologue et de la conclusion de la Passion de Perpétue et de Félicité', in *Bull. anc. litt. arch. chrét.*, 3 (1913), 126-32.

3

Prayers from Papyri and Potsherds

In 1708, Montfaucon asserted that he had never seen a papyrus. Since the nineteenth century, a great many have been brought to light by excavation—often mere fragments but sometimes complete rolls. Of these documents a certain number have made a real addition to our knowledge of the Christian past. Some have provided us with texts of biblical writings, others with parts of prayer-books.¹

It will thus be an act of piety to assemble some of these anonymous products of the early Christian period and see what they can teach us about the liturgical and private prayer, the faith and the life of Christians in an age that was still close to the beginnings of our religion. Taken as a whole, they seem to be very ancient; they stretch from the third century to the sixth. In the majority of cases, it is hardly possible to determine the date of their composition; at most, the age of the manuscript (which can be inferred from an examination of the type of writing used) provides a rough approximation.

The characteristic features of the prayers are, however, easier to discern. They are inspired by the Bible; both liturgical phraseology and private devotion are based on Scripture. Their background is the liturgy—the eucharist and the mysteries of the Christian year. The personal element becomes more prominent, especially in petitions for forgiveness. Devotion to the Blessed Virgin makes its appearance, in a biblical context.

PRAYERS TO GOD THE FATHER²

Morning Prayer

89 HELPER of men who turn to you,
Light of men in the dark,
Creator of all that grows from seed,
Promotor of all spiritual growth,

¹ As the price of papyrus was relatively high, the less affluent made do with *ostraca*, or pieces of broken pottery. The orthodoxy of the prayers found in the papyri is not always above suspicion.

² To avoid complication, the prayers from the papyri are classified according to their subject-matter. Details of date and provenance are given, as far as possible, with the references. The dots indicate gaps in the papyri.

have mercy, Lord, on me
and make me a temple fit for yourself.
Do not scan my transgressions too closely,
for if you are quick to notice my offences,
I shall not dare to appear before you.
In your great mercy,
in your boundless compassion,
wash away my sins, through Jesus Christ,
your only Child, the truly holy,
the chief of our souls' healers.
Through him may all glory be given you,
all power and honour and praise,
throughout the unending succession
of ages. Amen.¹

*Another Prayer*²

90 HOLY the God who from my youth
has shown me life and the light.
Holy the God and Father of all that exists.
Holy you are, who have existed from the beginning.
Holy you are, whom all your creatures know as God. . . .
Holy you are, who created all things by your Word.
Holy you are, whose nature has never lost its brightness.
Holy you are, whose nature . . .
Holy you are, and stronger than any other power.
Holy you are, and greater . . .
Holy you are, and above all praise.

Accept the words that from my heart and soul
strain to reach you,
Ineffable, Inexpressible, speaking in silence.
Let me not, I pray, be balked of knowledge
of our essential nature.
Stoop to me, make me strong,
and I will transmit that grace, as charity bids,
to my brothers, your sons.

¹ A private prayer, addressed to the Godhead through Christ and provided with a doxology to the Father.

² This prayer first pays homage to the holiness of God, who 'speaks in silence'. It goes on to pray, indirectly, to the Spirit, and then turns to the Father, to whom the final doxology also is addressed.

My spirit is the Holy Spirit's.
 Therefore I believe and confess my faith,
 which is the source of light and life to me.
 Blessed Father,
 man, your creature,
 would have you make him holy like yourself,
 for you have given him every means to become so.
 Glory is yours, now and always,
 age after age. Amen.

Prayer Called 'A Prayer of Peter and the Other Apostles'

91 HOLY you are, Lord God almighty,
 Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
 delightful Garden,
 kingly Sceptre,
 lavish Love,
 Hope assured and firm,
 Counsel . . .
 Holy you are, Lord God,
 King of kings and Lord of lords.¹
 You alone have immortality;
 you live in light that none can approach,
 and no man has ever seen it;
 you sit above the cherubim and thrones,
 you ride on the wings of the winds;
 you created the heavens, the land, the sea
 and all that is in them . . .
 you make the winds your messengers
 and the fiery flames your servants;
 you made man like yourself,
 an image of yourself you made him;
 you measured heaven with the span of your fingers
 and the whole earth with the palm of your hand . . .
 Fair indeed your works are to you.

Prayer for Help

92 GOD almighty, you who made
 the heavens, the land, the sea and all that is in them:
 help me, have mercy on me,

¹ From this point onwards, the biblical reminiscences are very noticeable.

wash away my sins;
 save me now and in the time to come,
 through our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.
 Through him may glory and power be given you,
 age after age. Amen.

Thanksgiving¹

- 93 ON you I call, God of the heavens, God of the earth, . . .
 Fulness of Life . . .
 He came into the world and drew Death's claws,
 came through Gabriel, came in the womb
 of Mary the virgin,
 was born at Bethlehem, reared at Nazareth,
 crucified . . .
 he rent the temple-veil,
 was laid in the tomb,
 rose from the dead on the third day,
 showed himself in Galilee,
 ascended into highest heaven . . .
 Countless myriads of angels on his left,
 countless myriads, too, of angels on his right;
 as one their voice, threefold their cry:
 Holy, holy the King of the world:
 his godhead fills the heavens.
 He takes the winds for roads to walk on.
 See where he comes, Mercy, God of the world.
 He ascended to the seventh heaven,
 to the Father's right hand,
 he, the blessed Lamb.
 His blood gave souls release. The brazen gates
 opened of themselves for him. He burst the iron bars
 and freed the prisoners from the dark.
 Death he unmanned. He took the apostate Enemy captive
 and thrust him into his proper solitude.
 The heavens exulted, earth rejoiced,
 because the Enemy was far from them;
 to all creation, sighing after its Lord,
 Jesus had given freedom.

¹ A hymn addressed to the Father. It takes the form of an anaphora, goes through the chief mysteries of the life of Jesus and uses the Trisagion from the liturgy.

His the voice that declares our sins forgiven
 whenever we call upon his holy name.
 Princedoms and powers,
 lords of the dark,
 spirits of impurity,
 swooping demons of the midday hours,
 agues cold and hot and intermittent,
 men's ill will,
 the Adversary's powers:
 none of these can avail against the Icon¹
 your godhead has fashioned.
 Yours the strength that triumphs through the ages.

*Prayer for Use on Saturdays*²

94 ON you we call, Lord God,
 all-wise, all-surveying, holy,
 the only true Sovereign.
 You created the universe,
 you watch over all that exists.
 Those that lie in darkness,
 overshadowed by death,
 you guide into the right road, the safe road.
 Your will is that all men should be saved
 and come to knowledge of the truth.

With one voice we offer you
 praise and thanksgiving;
 full-hearted, full-throated we sing you
 the hymn you have a right to at this hour.
 In your mercy you called to us
 (holy the calling!),
 taught us and trained us,
 gave understanding, wisdom, truth to us,
 life eternal.

¹ The image. The reference is to Christ, whom St. Paul calls the image or likeness of the God we cannot see (Col. 1:14).

² A magnificent prayer, which seems to mark the culmination of the week and is doubtless intended for the evening. It begins by recalling that this is the time for giving thanks and goes on to pray for loyalty to God's law.

The use of the plural suggests that the prayer is liturgical and meant for recitation in the assembly. It is addressed to the Father and in the doxology brings in the mediation of the Son.

You bought us back
with the pure and precious blood
of your only Son,
freed us from lies and error,
from bitter enslavement,
released us from the Devil's clutches
and gave us the glory of freedom.
We were dead and you renewed the life
of our souls and bodies in the Spirit.
We were soiled and you made us quite spotless again.

We pray you, merciful Father,
God from whom all encouragement comes,
give us strength to act as befits men with such a vocation,
such calling to worship, such newness of life.
We mean to observe the sacred commands
of the divine law;
we long to come closer to you, closer today,
long to have light from you, light to know you and serve you.

We pray you, give us the strength
to do all this with a will.
Do not think of the sins we have committed
or of those we still commit.
Put out of your mind the failings we give way to
night and day.
Do not impute our offences to us,
whether we did them on purpose
or whether we could not help them.
Remember, Lord,
that men are apt to make slips;
we are a spineless race, given to blundering:
think of our build, our limitations.
Our skins may be sound, but there are sores underneath. . . .

O God, you are well disposed to us:
give us the strength of your support.
Give us encouragement, give the light that goes with it.
Make us live by the dogmas of the faith
preached by your holy apostles
and the high teaching of the gospels
of our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

May we not be content only to hear and to speak of them
but behave and act as they bid us,
for then our conduct will deserve reward.

Teach us to look upwards,
to seek out and probe the heavenly,
not the earthly.
If that is our attitude and if you act in us,
what glory for your power,
all-holy, omnipotent, worthy of all praise;
glory through Jesus Christ, your beloved,
with the Holy Spirit,
now and throughout the ages.
Amen.

A Woman's Prayer

95 O QUICK; defend me from the claws of the dog, from the unicorns' horns,
and I will praise you, my God, among my brethren, in the assembly.
At the request of your martyrs Sabbatius, Probatius, Stephen and Cyriacus,
protect your servant, gracious God; rid her of every weakness in her soul.
For it is through the name of the Lord, the living God, that salvation comes.

Many have been at pains to set forth the history of what time has brought
to fulfilment among us.

A record of the ancestry from which Jesus Christ was born.

At the beginning of time the Word already was, and God had the Word
abiding with him, and the Word was God.¹

St. Phocas, St. Mercurius, protect your servant.²

Absolution

96 GOD eternal, all that is hidden is known to you,
all that will come to pass you see before it happens;
it is not your will that sinners should die:
you want them to repent and be saved.
Look, then, on this poor thing,
pitiful, sinful, your servant.³

¹ Opening words of the gospels according to Luke, Matthew and John.

² It is worth noting that the woman who wrote this prayer twice asks for the intercession of the saints.

³ Perhaps a preparatory prayer for the celebrant before mass.

Ejaculatory Prayer

97 GOD to whom we owe our crosses,
help your servant
Apphouas.
Amen.

Doxologies

98 GLORY to Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
Holy God, deathless, strong,
pity us, save us,
Son of God, our Saviour.
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

98a MAY none of God's wonderful works
keep silence, night or morning.
Bright stars, high mountains, the depths of the seas,
sources of rushing rivers:
may all these break into song as we sing
to Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
May all the angels in the heavens reply:
Amen! Amen! Amen!
Power, praise, honour, eternal glory
to God, the only Giver of grace.
Amen! Amen! Amen!

MYSTERIES CELEBRATED IN THE LITURGY
AND PRAYERS TO CHRIST

Christmas Hymn

99 ARE you in earnest, mortal men,
with your talk of justice?
Do you incline to neither side,
earthborn, in your judgements?
See, we confess the God born of a virgin,
God made man, but God no less for that.
He was born before the ages, had a Father then
(what can we know of his fatherhood?)
and now a maiden mother's given him flesh.
He fills the world,
yet stays distinct from it, unmingled with it.

Therefore our cry to him shall be:
 Mercy is yours, Lord: glory be to you.
 O holy God:
 how you have stooped, born a virgin's baby.
 Holy and strong:
 nothing would content you but support of Mary's arms.
 Holy Immortal:
 coming to Adam, leading him from Hades.
 O Christ, our God, mercy, mercy on us.¹

Grace-filled, unspotted, God-bearing virgin,
 holy your womb: Emmanuel lay in it.
 You fed at your breast the Food of the world.
 What praise can reach you, what glory touch you?
 Hail, God's mother, delight of the angels;
 hail, full of grace, foretold by prophets' preaching.
 The Lord is with you. The Child you bore
 has saved the world.

From a Christmas Liturgy

- 100 AT Bethlehem, shepherds were awake in the fields.
 An angel came from the Lord to them, bringing good news,
 telling the birth of Emmanuel.
 Round about the shepherds shone the Lord's glory,
 and the angel said: There is nothing to fear.
 He told them there was joy for them, great joy, for all the people:
 'Christ has been born today, the King and God and Saviour,
 born in David's city.'
 So with the angels we too must sing to him:
 Glory to God in the height of the heavens,
 peace on the earth to men that are his friends.

Epiphany Antiphon

- 101 AT Bethlehem born,
 at Nazareth brought up,
 he lived in Galilee.
 A sign in the sky; we saw it ourselves.

¹ Embedded in the prayer is the threefold invocation characteristic of the Eastern liturgies and found also in the Latin rite, in the liturgy for Good Friday (cf. no. 142). As applied to Christ, it is a formal acknowledgement of his divinity.

See the liturgy of the Syrian Jacobites, Brightman, 77. For the Copts, see ib., 155.

How the star shone! The shepherds that night
 in the fields fell to their knees in amazement and said:
 Glory to the Father, alleluia.
 Glory to the Son and Holy Spirit.
 Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.¹

On the back:

The 5th of Tybi.² Illustrious is St. John the Baptist,
 who preached throughout the world
 that to have our sins forgiven
 we must repent.

Easter Hymn

102 GLORY let us give him, let us sing: Glory, Lord, be yours.
 Christ was born of the Holy Spirit,
 born to bring us life.
 In mercy he came and lived among us.
 Worship let us give him, let us sing: Glory, Lord, be yours.
 See how the Virgin gave birth to Emmanuel.
 Down he came from heaven, took from Egypt³
 his people gone astray.
 Let us acclaim his greatness, let us sing: Glory, Lord, be yours.
 He came to make us triumph,
 the Lord, over the Enemy,
 came and lived in Mary;
 he the Invisible was seen in the flesh.
 Let us adore him, let us sing to him: Glory, Lord, be yours.
 The Word, the Truth, rose again because of us,
 the Lord enfleshed of a virgin never deflowered.
 Let us extol him, let us sing to him: Glory, Lord, be yours.
 From the dead he rose for us,
 Light proceeding from the Light,
 Christ the King.
 He delivered our souls from the land of Egypt.
 Join voice to voice and so let us sing to him: Glory, Lord, be yours.

¹ Note the fine Trinitarian doxology, with the concluding Alleluias.

² The 5th of Tybi is the 5th of January. The present Roman liturgy still commemorates the baptism of Jesus by John in the Jordan on the feast of the Epiphany.

³ An allusion to the enslavement of the Jews during their stay in Egypt. Moses, who delivered them from their slavery, has always been regarded as a figure of Christ.

The Liturgy of the Eucharist

I

103 WE are proclaiming your death, Lord;
 we praise you, Christ, for your holy resurrection.
 It is fitting, you say, for us to approach the table
 of these ineffable mysteries.
 Let us be eager, then, to receive our share
 of the spiritual gifts here spread before us;
 let us sing with the angels
 the triumphal Alleluia.

God the Word, he in the Father's bosom,
 was lately here upon the cross as well.
 He was laid in a tomb like any mortal
 —stooped so low, would have it so;
 but on the third day rose again and gave us
 O what gift of mercy.¹

2

104 ON Sinai's mountain once
 you spoke to Moses.
 Now you have taken a body
 —though from a stainless virgin,
 though it is free from sin,
 still, you have taken our flesh.

Time was when Israel
 had food from you.
 Now you have taken food yourself
 —though from an ever virgin mother,
 still, you have taken her milk.
 Wonder of wonders!

You used to make small count of kings,
 but now you've run away from one,
 to Egypt.

Having the highest of thrones,
 you lie now cramped in a manger.
 What though you still are His Majesty?

¹ A prayer perhaps sung during the communion. Note the juxtaposition of the two mysteries, the Passion and the Resurrection. See 'La Rédemption et l'histoire du monde', 2nd ed., Paris, 1951, pp. 87-114.

This believing, let us call the mother blessed,
let us sing our hymns to the Child.

God in heaven had no mother;
God, you'd say, on earth, is fatherless.¹
Glory, God, to you.

Communion Hymn

105 HE gave them bread from heaven
and men ate angels' bread;
he gave them bread from heaven.
Blessed the bread we have received.

We have taken the Lord's body and his precious blood.
The Lord has transformed the bread . . .
The saving cup is brimming with life.
We have received the holy bread.

Let us bless the God who has done such wonders
throughout the earth.
Praise God, all you peoples,
just souls, rejoice in the Lord:
you have received Christ's body and blood.

Thanks to you, Christ, our God:
you have thought fit to give us a share
or your body and blood;
you have gladdened our hearts. . . .

Prayer to Christ, the Firstborn

106 THE bright stars
and the forces in movement
are all eclipsed and robbed of lustre
by the sight of your light
and your great superiority.
You alone shine out, display²
the image of the Father's eminence
and show us the greatness
of Father and of Son.

¹ The original reads 'motherless'; ἀνευ μητρός. What one would expect, however, is 'fatherless', which has, accordingly, been put.

² The whole of this prayer is one long paraphrase of the first chapter of Colossians, which describes the place of Christ in creation.

What the great Father is
to the heavenly spheres
(all-blessed they),
that are you, his Child,
to this world of ours.
You are the First,
the Leader of the dance
and Lord of all the powers,
a second Greatness
flowing from the Father's,
the eternal Upholder
of the whole world's foundations.
You are a Token to us;
you set our ranks in order,
row us across the stream
and guide us on our way.
You are the Door that opens on to light,
the Token of justice,
our constant Star and Brightness.
We give you thanks and praise and blessing.
Confident, we fall upon our knees before you.

We ask you to give us all that will make for our good.
Grant that we may be firmly established in our faith
and give us the bodily health we need to praise you well.
Then shall we hymn your glory incessantly,
in every circumstance,
O God whom all men worship,
God the undying, unresting, eternal.
You are the Token whereby we can see
what our souls are meant to be like;
you are our Father:
you, blessed King, you, our God.
If we look, Lord, at you,
we shall never die;
if we confess your name,
we shall never be cut off from you;
if we pray to you,
we shall never be put to shame.
Restore to us, Lord,
the strength we had to begin with,

and make us maintain it
right to the end.
May we be confirmed in it and grow in it
until we reach our full stature
and perfection.

I praise you, Lord, because
you are powerful, bright, serene and luminous,
I praise you for your angels,
for those you send to guide and strengthen
all living souls,
for all who draw their life from you
and live as one with you
and do what you want them to do.
Great indeed, honoured and high above the rest
are those who sincerely call upon your name
and sing you the praises their faith has taught them.

In your lustrous clouds,
O God whom all men worship,
Undying, Unresting, Eternal,
you are the Token whereby we can see
what our souls are meant to be like:
you, blessed Father, you, our sovereign Leader,
borne in beauty on clouds of light,
going in mystery.
You are my Father, O Saviour, Upraiser,
O Giver and Taker of strength.
You make it clear what mould we were cast in;
to living souls you bring purity. . . .

You are the First,
and in every work of quality
you play the leading part.
When your beams pour down on your creatures
and shine amidst their errors,
then the angels,
the powers that guide our lives,
the images that represent you
in heaven and on earth,
the bright stars and the forces in movement
are all eclipsed and robbed of lustre

by the sight of your light and the beauty
of your great superiority.

PRAYERS TO MARY THE VIRGIN

Antiphon

107 TO you we flee for shelter and compassion, mother of God. You alone are chaste and blessed; do not disregard our prayers in this hour of need, but deliver us from danger.¹

Hymn

108 HAIL Mary,²
full of grace;
the Lord is with you,
the Holy Spirit too.
Your priests shall be robed in justice,
they that honour you shall rejoice and exult.
For David's sake, your servant, Lord,
save, Lord, your people, bless your chosen portion.

Hail to the glorious virgin,
Mary, full of grace.
The Lord is with you.
Blessed you are above all other women
and blessed is the fruit of your womb:
for he you conceived was Christ, the Son of God,
and he has redeemed our souls.

Prayer

109 HAIL, full of grace; the Lord is with you.³
The choice has fallen on you because
you are pure, spotless, responsive to God
and have always been
of the highest merit.

¹ This prayer has become very popular in a slightly different form. The *Sub tuum*, as we know it today, differs little from the original text. It may be rendered: 'To you we flee for shelter and protection, holy mother of God. Do not disregard our prayers in this hour of need, but deliver us from all dangers, ever-virgin, glorious, blessed.'

² An ancient form of the Ave Maria.

³ An elaboration of the angel's greeting to Mary. It quotes liberally from Scripture: Lk. 1:28-36.

You have found favour in God's eyes.

And see, you will give birth to a son
and will call him Jesus.

He will save the nations and will be called
the Son of God.

The Lord God will give him the throne of David, his father,
and he will rule over Jacob's house for ever.

His kingdom will never come to an end.

'How can that be, if I keep myself a virgin?'

The Holy Spirit will come upon you,
the power of God will cast its shadow on you.

That is why the Child to be born of you
will be called the Son of God.

'I am at the Lord's service:
be it as you say.'

O blessed above all women, it was the Lord that spoke to
you;

he it was that ordered the good news to be told you:

'Through your Son all the tribes of Judea
and all the races of the Gentiles
shall be saved.'

With the archangel and the angels
let us too do her honour.

Hail, beloved of the Lord,
seated by the Highest, hail;
hail, God-receiving,
hail, our link with the Saviour.

She is the dove that has led men away from destruction:
rejoice, then, brood of the virgin.

Hail, God-receiving,
received of God in heaven.

Hail, virgin,
hail, Mary,

O book for virgins to read in,
book that tells of the Light eternal;
hail, all hail.

4

Prayers Cut in Stone

Further traces of the prayer of the early Christians have been preserved in stone. A wealth of epigraphical material—inscriptions on houses, baptisteries and churches and, in particular, epitaphs recalling the memory of the brethren or the martyrs—shows what the prayer of these ancient times was like at its most spontaneous and personal, its least conventional. As Mommsen observes, ‘inscriptions belong not to literature but to life’.

On the threshold of eternity, when men lie defenceless before death, their faith and hope are strangely like those oil-lamps that are so often represented on tombs in the catacombs. The light they give seems to penetrate the barriers of the senses and reach as far as the throne of God.

The prayers used for inscriptions reveal deep faith in God. They are frequently Trinitarian in form, but often they are addressed to Christ and sometimes to the Holy Spirit alone. The faithful ask that the departed, or the ‘sleepers’, as they call them, may receive forgiveness, life, rest and peace, and that they may be one with God, or with Christ.

To Christians, the dead are more alive than the living; hence, in epitaphs, they ask for the intercession of the dead and beg them to remember their brethren who are still waiting for God to call them to him. Parents are found invoking their children.

The faith that underlies the inscriptions is given expression, with the greatest delicacy of feeling, through phrases borrowed from the Bible or the liturgy, particularly in the case of the longer ones. Most of them come from Egypt. They show a marked increase in number from the fourth century onwards, after the time when Constantine had brought peace to the Church.

But in none of these prayers is there any suggestion of weakness or insincerity. There is suffering, but there is nothing effeminate about it, and the hope that is expressed is of the strongest. The difference between these inscriptions and pagan ones, whether in the ancient world or in the modern, cannot fail to strike anyone who compares the two.

ACCLAMATIONS

Acclamations were an ancient form of prayer. They were used as ejaculatory prayers, in the liturgy, in the various circumstances of everyday life and more especially as

inscriptions on tombs. The examples given here are classified according to their subject-matter.

Peace and Rest¹

- 110 PEACE to them that are gone to God.
 May Ecymete be at peace.
 Peace be with you.
 The peace of Christ be with you.
 He sleeps the sleep of peace.
 May he sleep in peace.
 May he live in peace.
 At peace in a place of refreshment.
 Depart in peace.
 May you sleep in the peace of the Lord.
 Live for ever at peace.
 In the peace of sleep.
 With God in peace.

Living With God

- 111 MAY he be with God.
 May he be with the living God.
 May he be with the immortal God.
 May he be in God's hands.
 May he be where the great name of God is.
 May he be where God's greatness is.
 May he be with the living God
 now and on the day of judgement.
 Live in God, live in eternal delight.

With Christ

- 112 MAY he be with Jesus Christ.
 In Christ.
 Jesus Christ, help the writer
 and all his household.
 In the peace of Christ.
 Live in Christ.

¹ The idea of peace needs defining. The word denotes the serene and lasting possession of God's friendship: Ephesians 2:14. The inscription 'In Peace' is found as early as the first century. The reader will not need to be told that each line corresponds to a separate inscription.

Christ bid you welcome.
May your spirit be at peace in Christ.
In the name of Christ Jesus.

Prayers for Forgiveness

- 113 BEGGING forgiveness for his many sins.
For salvation and forgiveness of sins.
In your mercy, overlook his shortcomings
—the sins he knew he had done
and the faults he was not aware of.
Grant him forgiveness for his sins.

The Intercession of the Dead

- 114 PRAY for your parents.
Pray for your children.
May he pray for us.
Pray for us. Pray that we may be saved.
Pray for the one child you have left behind you.
Live in Christ and pray for us.

Waiting for God's Call

- 115 MARANATHA
Fearful the sentence God will give
on the day of judgement.
In hope of the resurrection.
In hope of the resurrection
and of Christ's mercy.
In hope of rising again and living for ever.
Let us be ready for the resurrection of the dead
and the life of the world to come.

The Holy Spirit

- 116 IN God's holy Spirit.
To Cyriacus, dearest of sons:
Live in the Holy Spirit.

EPITAPHS INSPIRED BY THE BIBLE AND THE LITURGY

Many epitaphs, the longer ones especially, draw their inspiration from the Bible or the liturgy. There is nothing surprising in that: it is after all only to be expected that

the forms in which faith is expressed in baptism and the liturgy should seem equally natural in private prayer as well. The epitaphs invoke God, the Trinity and Christ; and some, like the inscription on the tomb of Pectorius, mention the Eucharist.

Biblical Themes

- 117 LOVE God with all your heart
and your neighbour as yourself.
It is more blessed to give than to receive.
Share your bread with the hungry.
Of life and death, tongue holds the keys.
The words of the wise are like stars.
Speech uttered was ever the wise man's passport to fame.
[On the very day of a man's death
God can] give him his deserts.
How few there are that find it [life].¹

Abraham's Bosom

- 118 REMEMBER your servant Chrysis
and give her a place where there is light,
a place where she may find refreshment,
in Abraham's bosom, Isaac's, Jacob's.²
- 119 O GOD the all-powerful, existing always,
now and in the past and in the future,
Jesus Christ, Son of the living God:
remember that your servant ZONEINE
has ceased her labours and is at rest.
She was devout and loved your commandments.
Make her, then, fit to follow the lead
of Michael,³ your holy archangel, into the light,

¹ These examples are all exclusively composed of verses from Scripture.

² At this period, when the theology of the last things had yet to be worked out, 'Abraham's bosom' was regarded as a provisional resting-place for the soul before it was granted direct sight of God. It was thought that the martyrs alone were admitted to God's presence immediately after death; practically everyone else would have to wait until the end of the world. The Roman liturgy still speaks of Abraham in this connection, in the Subvenite, which is sung at funerals.

³ St. Michael is often represented in art as weighing souls. This function of his is not limited to iconography; it is recognised in the liturgy as well—the offertory of the present mass for the dead invokes his aid in this connection. The reason is that the Jews traditionally regarded the archangel as a sort of counsel for the defence of the dead before

into the bosom of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob,
the holy patriarchs.
Yours are glory and power
throughout the ages. Amen.

- 120 'LET me come in,' she said, 'Lord, into your house, Anointed.'
Quickly she had what she asked: God's light is now her possession.
Zosime, my holy sister, fallen in time of great danger,
sees them that died with her, died in that same holy combat, and seeing,
wonders to find them about her, rejoices to have them beside her.
Spirit so bold in only a girl amazes the fathers.
Vying with one another to welcome her to their numbers,
each would be foremost, clasping, embracing, giving ovation.
Great is the kingdom she sees and splendid the sights that she savours,
great her rejoicing because her merits have had their reward.
Death she despised, like you, Paul; like you she holds the garland;
she kept her faith, as you did, and ran the race to the end.¹
- 121 IN the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.
O God of spirits and of all flesh,
you have conquered death, trampled Hades underfoot
and given life to the world.
Give rest to the soul of my father, Sinethe . . .
in the bosom of Abraham, of Isaac and of Jacob,
a place of light and refreshment,
where no sorrow is, or pain, or sighing.²
Forgive him every sin he committed,
of word and deed and thought,
for you are kind and have men's good at heart,
and there is no man living that is without sin.
You alone are God and free from sin,
your justice is an eternal justice
and your word is truth.
Give rest to the soul of my father, Sinethe . . .
for you are the resurrection.

God's throne. The Epistle of Jude (ch. 9) alludes to the tradition and cites the (apocryphal) 'Assumption of Moses' in support of it. It was introduced into the Christian liturgy by converts from Judaism.

¹ An obvious allusion to 2 Tim. 4:7.

² There is a similar passage in the canon of the Roman mass, at the memento of the dead, where the Church asks God to give them refreshment, light and peace.

To you we give glory, to you we sing praises,
 Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
 Amen.

Prayers to the Trinity

122 IN the name of God, the all-powerful Father, and of our Lord Jesus Christ, his Son, and of the Holy Paraclete: Eusebius, their unworthy servant, restored the whole of this cemetery.

123 FATHER, Son and Holy Spirit,
 have mercy on the soul
 of Hanni, who found rest
 on the 15th of Michir.
 Amen.

124 JESUS Christ has conquered.
 Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
 have mercy on Ageni,
 the son of Kakkul.
 Amen.

125 NO justice so great as that of the God who is merciful!
 She was born of the Holy Spirit, born for Christ's glory.
 That she may be able to join the blessed and enter his service,
 I pray you, God, to whom all is possible,
 let her enter the paradise where all is light.

He that set up this inscription, in fulfilment of a vow, honours
 the Father and the Son.

126 GLORY to Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

On The Tomb of Agape

127 AND you, brethren, I beg you, when you come here to pray and you call in your prayers on the Father and the Son, do not forget to spare a thought for Agape. May the God of all power preserve Agape for eternal life.¹

On The Tomb of Lucifera

128 TO Lucifera, gentlest of wives, a gentle reception. Her departure was a great grief to her husband. This inscription was put up to remind the

¹ An epitaph dating from the end of the second century. It invokes the Father and the Son only, the theology of the Holy Spirit not yet having been worked out to any extent.

brethren, as they read it, to pray to God for her soul. May she attain purity and holiness and find a welcome with him.

On The Tomb of Theodota

129 IN the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.¹

Lord, give rest to the soul of your servant,
the blessed Theodota.

Pity her, God, for your mercy is great,
and because you are full of compassion
forgive her transgressions of your law.

Have pity on her, hold out your hand to her,
set her for ever beside you, on your right,
on one of those thrones you keep for the just,
and give her to drink the water that really refreshes.
She has lain to rest where the Lord is.

Amen. O Christ, born of Mary. Amen.

The blessed Leontius fell asleep in the month of Pharmouthi, in the third indiction.

130 O GOD, give him rest with the devout and the just
in the place where green things grow
and refreshment is and water,²
the delightful garden
where pain and grief and sighing
are unknown.
Holy, holy, holy, Lord God, Sabaoth;³
heaven and earth are full of your holy glory.

A Dead Man's Prayer to the Living

131 HOLY, holy, holy.³
Hail to you who still have the consolation
of seeing the light of our Father
who is in heaven.
Pray that we may have rest
in Christ Jesus, our Lord,

¹ A later inscription, apparently of the fifth century, with a Trinitarian doxology and an allusion to Mary at the end.

² A typically oriental picture of the happiness of the other world. To have seen the gardens of a Moroccan palace—the Bahja at Marrakech, for example—is to know what splendour a blazing sun can give to marble, mosaic and running water.

³ The trisagion of the liturgy.

and in his life-giving Spirit.
 May you receive the grace
 to spend your lives well before you leave this world;
 for even I, poor thing that I am,
 having lived the short space of life allotted to me,
 possess my share of what God has promised us.

EUCCHARISTIC INSCRIPTIONS

Inscription by Pectorius of Autun (beginning of the 3rd century)

- 132 ICHTHUS-BORN,¹ divine children of a heavenly father,
 drink with heartfelt reverence God's waters,
 the source of immortality to mortals.
 Fortify your soul, friend, with the ever-flowing waters
 of wisdom, the enriching.
 Take the honey-sweet food he offers
 who saves the saints;
 eats as a hungry man eats
 of the Ichthus you hold in your hands.²
 Feed us then, Lord; Saviour, feed us, I pray,
 with the Ichthus.

May my mother sleep well, I beg you, Light of the dead.
 Ascadius, father, dear to my heart,
 and you, sweet mother, you, my brothers,
 having the peace of the Ichthus, remember Pectorius.

Inscription of Abercius³

- 133 MY name is Abercius. I am a disciple of the holy shepherd⁴ who feeds
 his flocks on the mountains and in the plains. His eyes are large and every-
 thing comes within the range of his vision. . . .

¹ In the early Church the Greek word 'Ichthus', which means 'fish', was taken as a symbol of Jesus Christ, because the five letters of which the original Greek word is composed are also the initial letters of the words in the title 'Jesus Christ, Son of God, Saviour' [*Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς Θεοῦ Υἱὸς Σωτήρ* : *ΙΧΘΥΣ*].

² An allusion to the old way of communicating. The consecrated bread was received in the palm of the right hand, which was held over the left in the form of a cross, and the faithful communicated themselves.

³ Abercius was Bishop of Hierapolis, in Phrygia, during the reign of Marcus Aurelius.

⁴ Jesus Christ.

Faith was my guide everywhere and everywhere set food before me: a fish from the spring, very big and sound, caught by a holy virgin. This she would give her friends to eat at all times. And to drink, there was an excellent wine that she had and served with bread.¹

Prayer to Christ²

- 134 HE that is immortal suffered much for us:
 Jesus, the Christ;
 celestial offshoot of David's race:
 Jesus, the Christ;
 glorified throughout the world,
 the only Son, the deathless:
 Jesus, the Christ.
 In his mercy he came down from heaven to earth:
 Jesus, the Christ.
 From all eternity he has pointed out
 the true way of life:
 Jesus, the Christ.
 Jesus Christ, Son of Mary.

Prayers to the Dead

- 135 ANATOLIUS, our firstborn,
 ours for a little while,
 pray for us.
- 136 ATTICUS,
 sleep on in peace.
 Untroubled for your own safety,
 take thought for ours;
 pray about our sins.
- 137 MAGUS, you were only a child, and blameless:
 now you are with the innocents.
 It is a life you can never lose.

¹ This phraseology, intelligible only to Christians, means that Abercius could join in the eucharistic meal anywhere. This inscription and the preceding one show how deeply belief in the eucharist could affect the lives of the faithful.

² A prayer to Christ in the form of a litany, discovered in an Egyptian sarcophagus. The allusions to liturgical hymns are obvious enough.

How pleased you were when the Church's mother¹ welcomed you
as you left this world.

Not a sigh, then, not a tear:
breast and eye be still.²

INSCRIPTIONS ON HOUSES AND CHURCHES

From the time when Constantine brought peace to the Church, inscriptions began to appear on private houses, with a view to putting them under God's protection. Phrases from the liturgy and verses from Scripture were used for the purpose. And if this was the case with ordinary houses, still more so was it with churches, which were often ornamented with inscriptions based on the Bible.

138 THE victory is Christ's.
Begone, Satan.

139 OUR Lord Jesus Christ, God's Son and Word, lives here. Nothing evil
may come inside.

140 JESUS Christ, King of kings and Lords of lords,
in your mercy keep your eyes on this house,
day and night.

141 THIS is the Lord's door.
Those who come through it must be just.

142 GOD the holy,
God the strong,
God the undying,³
crucified for us,
have mercy on us.

143 YOU have our trust, Lord;
may we have your mercy.

On an Inn at Deir Sem'an

144 CHRIST, born of Mary.
This inn was finished in the month of Panemos . . .
Christ, help us.

¹ So it stands in the text, which Dom H. Leclercq supposes may refer to Mary. Others take it as a corruption of 'Mother Church'. [*Translator*]

² The mother's keen human love for her child is coloured by a faith that quite transfigures her mourning.

³ An allusion to the prayer said at the eucharist.

At Kefr-Ambil

145 MAY the Lord of the powers in his mercy protect us as we go in and out.

On a House at Rouciha

146 THE man whose house is protected by the Most High
will live in the shelter of God, the heavenly.
He will say to the Lord:
You are my defender, my refuge.
In you, my God, I put my trust.

At Dellousa

147 LORD, protect this house
and the people who live in it. Amen.
148 IF God is for us, who is against us?
Glory to him for ever.

Sepulchral Inscriptions

149 HOLY the God of the angels: the resurrection is his doing.
Holy the God of the prophets: the redemption is his doing.
Holy the God of the apostles: forgiveness is his doing.
150 GOD is eternal light.
May I die at peace with my God.
Lord, stay by our door.

Inscriptions on Churches

151 THE temple Solomon built, you say, was fairer.
—In art as fair, but faith makes this one rarer,
for there the Law's thick veil was wrapped about
what here, being open, stands more plainly out.
His temple shone with veined metallic light:
this, dyed with Christ's own blood, must shine more bright.
Gems, gold and cedar-wood? In vain they muster:
the cross sheds here a far more holy lustre.

152 BETTER a single day in your courts than a thousand anywhere else. I
would rather prostrate myself on the threshold of my God's house than
live with sinners in their tents, for the Lord loves mercy and truth.

- 153 CHRIST, born of Mary,
is the gate that opens into heaven,
the gate the just will go through.
Upon that rock will I build my Church,
and the gates of hell
shall not prevail against it.
- 154 GLORY to God in high heaven,
and peace on earth
to men that are his friends.

5

The Earliest Collections of Liturgical Material

The Christian liturgy developed out of the liturgy of the synagogue. For some years at the beginning, the majority of the Church was made up of Christians of Jewish origin. These remained faithful to the prayers of the Jewish ritual, which they supplemented with the eucharist, celebrated at the end of a common meal and accompanied by the Jewish prayers called the Blessings.

Little by little, the new Christians stopped using the Temple prayers and the eucharist was severed from the common meal, which became the Agape. The readings, chants, homily and prayers of the synagogue service survived in the eucharistic liturgy, supplemented by readings from the New Testament. This preliminary section served as an introduction to the celebration of the eucharist proper, which included the thanksgiving (based on the Jewish Blessings), the breaking of the consecrated bread and the distribution.

The Sunday liturgical celebration is described by Justin (died c. 165), a contemporary of the Didache, as follows:¹

'On the day called Sunday, all the people assemble together, regardless of whether they live in the town or whether their homes are in the country. The writings of the apostles and prophets are read, as far as time allows. When the reader stops, the person presiding comments on the admirable models thus set before them; he explains the lesson they have to teach and shows how they challenge imitation. Then we all rise together and offer prayer; and, as I said, when we have finished our prayer, bread, wine and water are brought in. The president prays and gives thanks as long as he can, and the people signify their assent by saying "Amen". The blessed elements are distributed and everybody takes a piece; those who are not present have it sent to them by the deacons.'

Little by little, as Duchesne says,² habits became rites and rites developed into increasingly complicated ceremonies. At the same time, the themes of the liturgical prayers became fixed. By the third century, the 'Apostolic Tradition' was providing forms for baptism, the eucharist and ordination; by the fourth, two distinct types of liturgy were in existence in the east—the Syrian ('Apostolic Constitutions') and the Alexandrian or Egyptian (Euchologium of Serapion).

¹ 1 Apol. 67:3-5.

² *Origins of Christian Worship*, p. 54.

THE DIDACHE

A manuscript of the 'Didache' or 'Teaching of the Twelve Apostles' was discovered in 1873. The work, which is anonymous, was highly thought of in the early Christian period but had not been known to survive. It was a sort of catechism for the use of the faithful. It seems to be of Syrian origin and it influenced later collections of liturgical material, particularly the Apostolic Constitutions. The following prayers went with the liturgy of the eucharist. They call God Father and are based on the New Testament.

Eucharistic Prayers

With regard to the eucharist, this is the way you should give thanks. First, for the chalice:

155 WE give you thanks, Father,¹
for the holy vine of your servant, David,
which you made known to us through Jesus, your Child.

Glory to you throughout the ages.

For the broken bread:

We give you thanks, Father,
for the life and knowledge
you sent us through Jesus, your Child.

Glory to you throughout the ages.

As the elements of this broken bread, once scattered over the mountains,
were gathered together and made one,
so may your Church be built up from the ends of the earth
and gathered into your kingdom.²

Glory and power are yours
through Jesus Christ and ever will be. . . .

When you have had your fill, give thanks thus:

We give you thanks, holy Father,
for your holy name,
which you planted in our hearts,
and for the knowledge, faith and immortality
you sent us through Jesus Christ, your Child.

¹ Prayers prompted by intense emotion, addressed to God as Father rather than as Sovereign, and offered through Christ as *παῖς*, which can mean 'servant' or 'child'.

² The Syrian liturgies and the Latin fathers from St. Cyprian (Letter 63, 13) onwards were to make this a standard image.

Glory to you throughout the ages.

You created everything, sovereign Lord,
for the glory of your name.

You gave food and drink to men
for their enjoyment,
as an occasion of thanksgiving;
and to us you have given the blessing
of spiritual food and drink
and eternal life, through your Child.
Above all we thank you
because you are powerful.

Glory to you throughout the ages.

Remember, Lord, to deliver your Church from all evil
and to teach it to love you perfectly.
You have made it holy: build it up from the four winds
and gather it into the kingdom you destine it for.

Power and glory are yours
throughout the ages.

Come grace and the world may pass on its way.

Hosannah to the God of David.

If you are holy, come forward;
if you are not, repent.

Maranatha.

Amen.

THE APOSTOLIC TRADITION

The 'Apostolic Tradition', composed by Hippolytus, is the only third-century liturgical book that has come down to us. It deals with the organisation of the hierarchy, the catechumenate, offerings, the eucharist, the agape, fasting and the times for prayer.¹ The liturgical formulae are given by Hippolytus simply by way of example (10). As such, they are of the greatest value for the information they provide about the Roman liturgy. The anaphora of Hippolytus is still used today by the Christians of Abyssinia.

Baptism

At cock-crow, the candidates assemble by the water—it should be running water and clean.

¹ Hippolytus' directions for prayer will be found in Part Four.

Those who are to receive baptism are taken aside by the priest one by one. He tells them to turn to the east¹ and make their abjuration in the words:

156 I RENOUNCE you, Satan; I renounce what you tempt me to, I renounce what you do.

When the candidate has made this declaration, he is anointed with the oil used in exorcising. The words said are:

May every evil spirit depart from you.

The candidate then goes down into the water and the person baptising him lays his hand on his head, saying:

Do you believe in God, the Father, the all-powerful?

The person being baptised replies:

I do.

The person baptising gives the first baptism, with his hand on the candidate's head. He then says:

Do you believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who was born through the Holy Spirit of Mary, the virgin, was crucified at Pontius Pilate's bidding, died, was buried, rose alive from the dead the third day after, went up to heaven, sits at the Father's right hand and will come to judge the living and the dead?

He says:

I do.

He is baptised a second time.

He is then further asked:

Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Church and the resurrection of the body?

The person being baptised says:

I do.

He is baptised a third time.

When he has come up again, he is anointed by the priest with the blessed oil. The priest says:

I anoint you with holy oil in the name of Jesus Christ.

¹ The east stands for the part of the world where paradise is, the scene of Christ's second coming; the west symbolises the lair of the evil spirits.

They all dry themselves and put on their clothes and then they go into church. The bishop lays his hand on them and prays, saying:

Lord God, you have made them fit to have their sins forgiven through the bath the Holy Spirit uses to confer new birth. By infusing your grace into them, enable them to serve you as you will.

For glory is yours in the holy Church, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and yours it will be throughout the ages. Amen.¹

Then, letting the blessed oil run from his hand and applying it to the head of the newly baptised, he says:

I anoint you with holy oil in the name of the Lord—the almighty Father, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit.

After the anointing, he kisses them, saying:

The Lord be with you.

The baptised reply:

May he be with your spirit too.

The Anaphora

The oldest form that we possess for consecrating the eucharistic offerings is the one given by Hippolytus. Though addressed to the Father, it does not dwell on the blessings of creation but, as in baptism, concentrates on the mysteries of the life of Christ. It asks for the Holy Spirit to come down on the offerings, the Church and the communicants.

The absence of the Sanctus should be noticed. The introduction of the Sanctus, which blurs the outline of the later liturgies, was suggested by the association of the choirs of angels with the Church's praise of God.

Giving thanks with all the priests,² the bishop says:

157 THE Lord is with you.³

¹ An example of the variety of Trinitarian doxology peculiar to Hippolytus. Its special characteristic is the express reference to the Church, which is also found in Hippolytus' book against Noetus, 18, and again in the 'Apostolic Tradition', 3 and 8. On the significance of this reference, see Nautin, 'Je crois à l'Esprit-Saint, dans la sainte Eglise, pour la résurrection de la chair', Paris, 1947. Cf. St. Paul's doxology, no. 20 above.

² This implies that there was concelebration, i.e. a single celebration by bishop and priests together, at Rome.

³ St. Cyprian's treatise on the Lord's Prayer, c. 31, provides evidence that these acclamations were used in Africa also.

All reply:

May he be with your spirit too.

Set your hearts on the things above.

They are fixed on the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord.

It is right and proper that we should.

The bishop continues thus:

We give you thanks, O God, through your dear Child, Jesus Christ, whom in this, the last of all periods of time, you sent to save and redeem us and to tell us what you wanted of us.

He is your Word, inseparable from you; you made all things through him and you were well pleased with him.

You sent him from heaven to a virgin's womb; he lay in that womb and took flesh, and you were presented with a Son, born of the Holy Spirit and of the virgin.

He did what you wanted him to do, and when he suffered, acquiring thereby a holy people for you, he stretched out his hands¹ to free those who believed in you from suffering.

When he was handed over to undergo the suffering he had chosen himself, thereby to destroy death, to break the chains the Devil held us in, crush hell beneath his feet, give light to the just, make a covenant and manifest his resurrection: he took bread, gave thanks to you and said:

Take this and eat it: it is this body of mine that is to be broken for you.

In the same way, he took the chalice, saying:

This is my blood being shed for you. When you do this, you will be commemorating me.

Calling, then, his death and resurrection to mind, we offer you bread and a chalice and we thank you for enabling us to stand before you and serve you.

We ask you to send down your Holy Spirit on the offering holy Church makes you, to unite all who receive holy communion and to fill them with the Holy Spirit, for the strengthening of their faith in the truth.

So may we give you praise and glory, through your Child, Jesus Christ.

¹ This is a favourite idea of Hippolytus'. It is found in the Easter homily attributed to him, no. 44 above, and it occurs again in his book on Antichrist, ed. Achelis, 42.

Through him may glory and honour be yours, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, in holy Church, now and throughout all ages. Amen.

Communion Prayer

The bishop says:

158 O GOD, all-powerful, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, we beg you that when we receive this sacred mystery, it may bring us blessing. May the holy mystery of Christ's body and blood bring condemnation to none of us¹ but rather ennoble all who receive it, O sovereign Lord, our God.

The deacon says:

Pray.

The bishop says:

All-powerful God, grant that the receiving of your holy mystery may give us strength. May it not mean damnation to any of us; may it fill us all with blessings,¹ through Christ. Through him may glory and power be yours, now and always and for ever. Amen.

The deacon:

Remain standing, but bow your heads.

The bishop:

Eternal God, to whom the hidden is as clearly known as the visible: before you your people bow their heads, to you they submit their hard hearts and unruly bodies. Send down blessing from your glorious dwelling on these men and women, lend them a ready ear and answer their prayers. Set them up firmly with your strong hand and protect them against all evil passions. Preserve their bodies and souls, increase their faith and fear and increase ours, through your only Son.

Through him and with him and with the Spirit may glory and power be yours, now and always and for ever.² Amen.

The deacon:

Pay attention.

¹ Allusion is repeatedly made in this prayer to 1 Cor. 11:29.

² The doxologies of the two prayers said by the bishop are not of the kind usually found in the 'Apostolic Tradition'. The first one does not mention the Holy Spirit by name, and neither of them speaks of the Church.

The bishop:

Holy things are for the holy.

The people:

There is only one Father, only one holy Son, only one Holy Spirit.

The bishop:

The Lord be with you.

The people reply:

May he be with your spirit too.

They raise their hands to give glory to God; to obtain health for their souls and forgiveness for their sins they approach the altar.

After communion:

All-powerful God, Father of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, we thank you for allowing us to receive your holy mystery. May it not cause sin or damnation in us but bring us renewal of body, soul and spirit, through your only Son.

In him and with him and in the Holy Spirit may glory and power be yours, now and always and forever.

And the people say:

Amen.

The priest lays his hands on the communicants and says:

Eternal, all-powerful God, Father of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, bless your servants, protect them, support them and give them happiness, through the power of your archangel. Keep them in ever greater awe of your majesty, through your only Son.

In him and with him and with the Holy Spirit may glory and power be yours, now and always and for ever.

The people:

Amen.

The bishop:

The Lord be with you.

The people answer:

May he be with your spirit too.

The deacon says:

Go in peace.

HOLY ORDERS

The laying-on of hands and the invocation of the Holy Spirit are common to the three degrees of ordination and constitute the rite of consecration. The bishop alone lays his hands on the deacons, because they are 'ordained to serve the bishop'. This note is the only part of the 'Apostolic Tradition' to have found a place in the Roman Pontifical, where it has been incorporated into a rubric, though in a truncated form.

The prayers of consecration contain an admirable wealth of teaching about holy orders; they emphasise the continuity between the priesthood of the Old Testament and the priesthood of the New.

Prayer at the Consecration of a Bishop

159 O GOD and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, merciful Father and God from whom all comfort comes: you live in heaven yet turn your attention to humble things; you know all things before they come into being.

The limits you have set to your Church are those made by your word and by the grace it brings. Abraham's progeny, the race of the just, you predestined from all eternity; you appointed rulers and priests, for you would not have your sanctuary to be without its liturgy; from the beginning of the world it was your will to be glorified by those whom you had chosen for the purpose.

Pour out now that power that comes from you, that sovereign Spirit whom you gave to your dear Son,¹ Jesus Christ, and afterwards to the holy apostles, who in place of the Temple built you the Church, wherein your holy name should be for ever praised and given glory.²

Father, you know the secrets of all hearts. Grant that this servant of yours whom you have chosen for the episcopate may feed your holy flock and serve you in this exalted priesthood night and day without reproach.

¹ The different versions are not in agreement here: is it the Son or the Servant who is meant?

² The Church takes the place of the Temple of the old Law, and a new tribe, as it were, founded by Christ and continued first by the apostles and then by the bishops, keeps up the services in it. The idea brings out the continuity of God's plan very clearly.

May he induce you to look on us forgivingly; may he offer you your holy Church's gifts; may he have power to forgive sins through the Spirit of the supreme priesthood, as you have commanded, to assign to everyone the portion you order, to loosen all shackles through the power you gave the apostles, to be mild and clean through and through and so to please you and be in good odour with you, through your Child, Jesus Christ.¹

Ordination of Priests

The bishop says the following prayer:

- 160 GOD and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, look to the needs of this servant of yours and grant him the Spirit of grace and counsel, that with singleness of purpose he may help your priests and govern your people; just as when you looked to the needs of the people you had chosen for your own, you told Moses to choose elders and you filled them with the Holy Spirit you had given him.

Grant that your grace-giving Spirit, Lord, may always stay within us; preserve our faith, and enable us to serve you single-heartedly and to praise you through your Child, Jesus Christ.

Through him in holy Church, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, glory and power are yours, as they will be throughout all ages. Amen.

Ordination of Deacons

The bishop says:

- 161 O GOD, you created all that exists, and to everything you assigned a place of its own, through that Word of yours whom you sent to serve your ends and to show us what you wanted of us. Bestow the Spirit of grace and zeal and diligence on this your servant, whom you have chosen for the service of your holy Church. May he bring the gifts to the holy of holies to be offered by the high priests,² whose order you have established for the glory of your name.

Grant that serving you thus, diligently and with singleness of purpose, he may be considered fit to go up a step higher whenever it pleases you, praising you through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Through him glory, power, might and honour are yours and his and the Holy Spirit's, and always and for ever will be. Amen.

¹ The prayer has a peculiar vigour of its own and its doctrinal content is amazingly rich.

² The deacon presented the offerings to the bishop at mass for consecration.

BLESSINGS

The various offerings mentioned are distinct from the eucharist and have special blessings of their own. In addition to oil, cheese and olives, offerings were made of 'grapes, figs, pomegranates, pears, mulberries, peaches, cherries and almonds'; and in the way of flowers, roses and lilies were offered. All these were blessed.

Blessing of Oil

- 162 YOU it is, Lord, who sanctified oil and gave it to us for the sanctification of those who use it or receive it. As with oil you anointed men and made them kings, or priests, or prophets, so grant that this oil may bring strength to those who drink it and health to those who use it.¹

Blessing of Cheese and Olives

- 163 SANCTIFY this milk that has been pressed into cheese, and press us together in charity. Grant that this fruit of the olive-tree may never lose its savour; for the olive is a symbol of that abundance which, at your bidding, flowed from the tree² and is there for those who trust you.

Blessing of the New Fruits

- 164 WE give you thanks, O God, and we offer to you the fruit³ you have given us. You produced it through your Word; you bade the earth bring forth fruit of all kinds, to give pleasure and nourishment to men and to all the other animals.

We praise you, God, for all these gifts and for all the blessings you gave us when you adorned the whole creation with such a variety of fruit, through your Child, Jesus Christ, our Lord; through whom your glory will come to you throughout the unending succession of ages. Amen.

Prayer at the Lighting of the Lamp

The Jews used to bless their lamps on Friday and Saturday evenings, to mark the beginning and end of the sabbath. The rite became the basis of the corresponding Christian ceremony, which, however, in addition to the blessing of the lamp, also included a thanksgiving for the day just ended.

¹ The blessed oil was used for the anointing of the sick, which was done in their own homes. See Serapion of Thmuis, nos. 195 and 207 below.

² The cross.

³ The blessing of the first fruits, inspired by the Old Testament as far as the thought behind it is concerned, is of the highest antiquity. The Leonine Sacramentary explains the theology of the practice in one of its prefaces, no. 321 below.

When twilight falls,¹ if the bishop is present, the deacon brings a lamp. Standing in the midst of the faithful, before the thanksgiving, the bishop first says the greeting:

165 THE Lord be with you.

And the people say:

May he be with your spirit too.

The bishop:

Let us give thanks to the Lord.

The people:

It is right and proper that we should. His are greatness, magnificence and glory.

He does not say, 'Set your hearts on the things above', because that will be said when the offering is made.

He prays thus:

We thank you, O God, through your Child, Jesus Christ our Lord, because you have enlightened us and revealed to us the light that is incorruptible.

The day's allotted span is over; we have reached the beginning of the night. We have had our fill of that daylight which you created for our pleasure.

And now that evening has come and again we have no lack of light, we praise your holiness and glory, through your only Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.

Through him the glory and power that are his and the honour that is the Holy Spirit's are also yours, as they will be throughout the unending succession of ages.

All say:

Amen.

The Agape²

When the meal is over, the children and the virgins sing psalms by the light of the lamp.

¹ One of the earliest of all Christian hymns is an evening hymn in honour of the cheering qualities of the light. See no. 223 below.

² The agape was a common meal. Originally, no doubt, it took place before the eucharist, as St. Paul's first Epistle to the Corinthians seems to show, but it was quite soon detached and regarded as an independent rite.

The deacon takes the cup of wine and water left over from the meal and says one of the alleluia psalms.

The bishop then offers the cup,¹ as is fitting. He too says the alleluia psalm.

While he says the psalm, the others all together say:

166 ALLELUIA, *that is to say:* we praise him who created the world merely by saying the word.

Similarly, when the psalm is finished, he gives thanks for the bread and distributes a morsel to each of the faithful.

THE ANAPHORA OF THE APOSTLES

Careful analysis of the Chaldaean Anaphora of the Apostles or Anaphora of Addeus and Maris has led Dom Botte to regard this prayer of oblation, with every appearance of probability, as one of the oldest—as contemporary, in fact, with the Anaphora of Hippolytus. It seems to have come from Edessa and to have been used in Syria. It is still used today by the Nestorians, the Christians of the Malabar Rite (India), and the Chaldaean Uniates.

The Sanctus and the invocation of the Holy Spirit (quoted below) seem to be later additions—which makes the resemblance of this prayer to the Anaphora of Hippolytus all the more striking, especially as the one does not depend on the other. The anaphora consists of a thanksgiving, followed by the narrative of the institution and an anamnesis.

167 MAY the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God the Father be with us all, and may the Holy Spirit be imparted to us, now and for ever, age after age. Amen.

Let your minds dwell on the things above.

May they dwell on you, God of Abraham and Isaac and Israel, glorious King.

Let us offer our oblation to God, the Lord of the universe.

It is right and proper that we should.

It is right that the glorious and venerable name of the illustrious Trinity should be praised by every mouth, confessed by every tongue, worshipped and adored by every creature: for he did us the favour of creating the world, in his mercy gave it inhabitants, in his pity saved mankind and bestowed boundless blessing on mortals.

“The spirits of heaven bless and worship your majesty, Lord, in their thousands, countless myriads of holy angels too; hosts of spiritual beings, who serve the fire and the spirit, give glory to your name, with the holy

¹ This no doubt corresponds to the extra cup, added by the Jews to the usual one on feast-days.

cherubim and the spirits called seraphim presenting their worship of your greatness. Ceaseless the hymn they sing in your praise, as they call to one another, saying:

‘Holy, holy, holy is the Lord almighty. Heaven and earth are steeped in his glory, permeated by his presence, full of the splendour of his greatness. Hosannah in high heaven. Hosannah to the Son of David. Blessed is he that comes and will come again in the name of the Lord. Hosannah in high heaven.

‘And with those heavenly powers’

we too praise you, Lord, we your servants, weak and frail and feeble; for you have shown us measureless favour, which we never can repay.

You took our human nature on yourself and through your own nature, which was divine, you gave us life. We were of no account, and you gave us a place on high; we had fallen, and you lifted us up; we were mortal, and you raised us to a new life. You forgave our sins, effaced our guilt, poured light into our minds. You pronounced sentence on our enemies, O Lord, our God, and now poor frail mankind is triumphant. All this was the work of your abundant mercy and grace. For these and all your other favours, for all the assistance you have given us, may we give you praise and honour, blessing and worship, now and for ever, age after age. Amen.¹

Narrative of the institution.

We too, Lord, your servants, weak and frail and feeble, have gathered together in your name and come into your presence. The sacrament that comes from you we have received by tradition.

Gladly we praise and extol this mystery, call it to mind and re-enact it—this great and terrible mystery, holy, life-giving, divine: the mystery of the passion and death, the burial and the rising of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

‘May your Holy Spirit come and rest, Lord, on this, the offering your servants make you. May he bless and sanctify it, that through it we may receive forgiveness of our sins and pardon for our offences, confident hope of rising from the dead, and a new life in the kingdom of heaven with all who have ever pleased you.’

And for all your great and wonderful designs for us may we bless and praise you for ever in your Church, which you have redeemed by the precious blood of your Christ; with zeal and sincerity may we praise and

¹ The narrative of the institution of the eucharist, which is missing from the texts now in use, must once have come at this point.

honour, bless and worship your living and holy and life-giving name, now and for ever. Amen.

THE APOSTOLIC CONSTITUTIONS

The 'Apostolic Constitutions' are the most important collection of canons and liturgical material produced in the first few centuries. The eight books of which the work is composed must have been written by a single author (his name is not known), in Syria or at Constantinople, about the year 380. He borrows from the Didascalia, the Apostolic Tradition and the Didache.

Book VII contains a series of prayers. Book VIII, which is the most important, provides us with the text of the so-called Clementine mass,¹ the oldest example we have of an anaphora of the Syrian type. If the prayers were never officially prescribed in this form, they nevertheless indicate general themes, which can be checked against other documents.

The Eucharist

After the lessons, chants and homily, the catechumens are dismissed and the mass properly so called begins, with the anaphora or prayer of consecration.

The bishop begins a dialogue with the people present:

168 THE grace of God, the all-powerful, and the love of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. May the Holy Spirit be imparted to you.²

Be it so with you too.

Set your minds on the things above.

They are fixed on the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord.

It is right and proper that we should.

It is indeed right and proper that we should give especial praise to you the true God, who existed before any of your creatures and from whom all fatherhood in heaven and on earth takes its title. You alone are unbegotten, without beginning, subject to no lord or master. Wanting for nothing, you provide us with all the good we have. Too great to be affected by causality or generation, you remain for ever changeless. You are the source whence all things come into being.

¹ So called because, by a literary fiction current at the time, the author attributes his work to St. Clement of Rome.

² The later Eastern liturgies always use this Trinitarian opening to introduce the preface. The other acclamations were, and still are, common to both east and west. We have already noticed them in St. Hippolytus, no. 157 above.

You are Knowledge that never had a beginning, eternal Sight, Hearing that did not need to be given birth, Wisdom that required no teaching. By nature the foremost, as a being unique, you are beyond the scope of number. You brought all things from nothingness into existence through your only Son, whose Father you were before time began, Father by your own will and power and goodness, without any intermediary. He is your only Son, God the Word, living Wisdom; his is that first birth which precedes every act of creation; he is the Messenger who has announced your great design, your High Priest, the Lord and King of all creatures—those with minds and those that merely have bodies. He existed before anything else and it is through him that everything subsists.

Through him, eternal God, you made all that is, and through him you administer the whole with your careful providence; for as it was through him that you bestowed the favour of being, so it was through him that you made the gift of well-being. You are the God and Father of the only Son. Through him you created first of all the cherubim and seraphim, the acons and hosts, the powers and principdoms, the dominations and thrones, the angels and archangels; and after all that, you created through him this visible world and all that is in it.

You set up the sky like a canopy and spread it out like a tent; by a mere act of will, you gave the earth stability when there was nothing to support it; you made the firmament solid. You created night and day. From among your treasures you brought out the light and to mitigate its effect produced the darkness, whereby the living things that move on the earth might have rest. The sun you placed in the sky to regulate the daylight and the moon to preside over the darkness; the dancing stars you put there to praise your magnificence.

You made water for us to drink and wash with and the moving air for us to breathe in and out. And the air was to give out a sound when the tongue struck it and to help the ear to grasp the words that came to it.

You made fire to console us for the darkness, to supply our need, to warm us and give us light.

You separated the great sea from the land, decreeing that the one should be crossed in ships and the other on foot. The sea you filled with animals great and small. The land you stocked with tame beasts and wild; you adorned it with the various kinds of plants, covered it with grass, embellished it with flowers and enriched it with seeds.

You established the abyss and surrounded it with a vast wall. The ocean with its salt waters, piled wave upon wave, you kept in place with powdery gates of sand. Sometimes you lift it with the winds as high as the

mountains, sometimes you smooth it out like the plains; you rouse it to fury with storms or you soothe and calm it until it is fit for sailors to ride on.

The world which you brought into being through Christ you divided up with rivers, watered with abundance of rushing streams, generously provided with ever-flowing springs; and you bound it together with mountains to give the earth firm and unshakable stability.

You put the finishing touch to this world of yours when you gave for its adornment sweet-smelling herbs and healing ones, the many different animals—the strong ones and the weaker sorts, those good for eating and those that can be made to work, the tame ones and the wild—hissing serpents and brightly coloured chirruping birds, the returning years, the numbered sequence of months and days, the solstices duly recurring, the rain-clouds in movement to increase the crops, provide for men's sustenance and house the winds, until they receive your command to blow and bring the plants and herbs to maturity.

Not only did you make the world but you made man to live in it, and you decreed that he should be himself a world within that world. In your wisdom you said: 'Let us make man, wearing our own image and likeness; let us put him in command of the fishes in the sea, and all that flies through the air.' So you made him with an immortal soul and a corruptible body, drawing the one from nothingness and the other from the four elements. In the spiritual order you gave him the power to make rational judgements, to discern between piety and impiety, to distinguish the just from the unjust. In the bodily order your gifts were the senses, with their five kinds of activity, and the power to move from place to place.

Through Christ, God the all-powerful, you planted a garden in Eden, away in the east, and filled it with every kind of plant that could be eaten in the world; and you brought man there and put him into it, and a magnificent home it was for him. You gave him an inborn law to guide his conduct, for you wanted him to have the seeds of the knowledge of God within him, in his own person.

When you put him into that delightful garden, you gave him the enjoyment of everything in it save one thing only, which you forbade him to taste, as he was to hope for something better still: if he obeyed your command, he would receive immortality as his reward.

But man paid no heed to your command; by the serpent's wiles and his wife's advice he was led to eat the forbidden fruit. As justice required, you cast him out of paradise, but in your kindness you did not put this mortal creature entirely out of your mind; for after all, he was a piece of your own workmanship. You subjected the rest of creation to him and allowed him

with effort and toil to provide his own food, you the Giver of life and increase and maturity. Only a little while, and with an oath you called upon him to be born again; you revoked the sentence of death and promised him resurrection and life.

And it was not only the first man whom you thus exalted: you have honoured as well the countless multitude of his descendants who have remained faithful to you, while those who have rebelled against you have received punishment. You accepted the sacrifice of Abel the just but rejected as accursed the gift of his brother Cain, who killed him. Seth and Enos received a welcome from you; Henoch you took to yourself.

You it was who created men; you give us our life, supply our needs, provide us with the commandments of the law, reward those who observe them and punish those who transgress them. You sent the great flood because of the great numbers of the impious, and Noe the just you preserved from the flood in the ark with eight other souls: the end of the past was the beginning of the age to come. You rained down terrible fire on the five cities of Sodom, and land that once was fruitful you changed into a salty marsh to punish its people's guilt. Lot you snatched away from the burning because he was a saint.

You it was who delivered Abraham from ancestral impiety, made him heir to the whole world and gave him a glimpse of your Christ. You appointed Melchisedech as the high priest of your worship; your servant Job, his many sufferings over, you declared victorious over the serpent, the originator of evil; Isaac's birth was the fulfilment of your promise; Jacob you made the father of twelve children and his descendants a whole clan: there were seventy-five of them when you led them into Egypt.

Lord, you did not despise Joseph; you rewarded his chastity, kept for your sake, with the gift of Egypt to rule over. Neither, Lord, did you forsake the Hebrews when the people of Egypt oppressed them: you set them free, as you had promised their fathers, and you punished the Egyptians.

When men forsook the natural law and took the world for something independent of you, or gave it more honour than it deserved and regarded it as your equal, O God of all that is, you did not allow them to continue in their error: you raised up your holy servant Moses and through him gave them a written law to reinforce the law of nature. You showed them that the creation was your work and you extirpated the error of polytheism. You honoured Aaron and his descendants with the office of priesthood; you punished the Hebrews for their sins and welcomed them when they repented.

You punished the Egyptians with ten plagues, divided the sea and led the Israelites through it; and as the Egyptians came on in pursuit, you destroyed them in the deep waters. You turned salt water into fresh with a bough from a tree, poured water from sharp-faced rock, sent showers of manna from the sky and quails for food from the air. You sent a pillar of fire at night to give light and a pillar of cloud in the day-time to provide shade from the heat. You raised up Jesus¹ to be the leader of the army and by his means overthrew the seven tribes of the Chanaanites. You arrested the flow of the Jordan and dried up the rivers of Ethan. You brought the walls to the ground without the aid of human hands or of any engine of war.

Glory to you, Lord of all power, for all these blessings. Numberless armies of angels adore you, archangels too, thrones, dominations, prince-doms, powers, virtues and heavenly hosts, the cherubim and the six-winged seraphim, hiding their faces with two of their wings, hiding their feet with two more, with the other two flying. With the archangels in their tens of thousands and the angels in their countless myriads they cry out without ceasing, never resting their voices.

And all the people shall say with them: Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts. Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Blessing to you throughout the ages. Amen.

The celebrant continues:

Holy you are indeed, all-holy; exalted you are and more than exalted you will be throughout the ages. Holy too is your only Son, our Lord and God, Jesus Christ, who has always given his support to you, his God and Father, for the creating and ruling of the world. Though the human race had wrought its own destruction, he did not abandon it. There had been the law of nature, the revealed law with all its wealth of exhortation, the prophets with their reproaches; the angels had been sent on their mission. And men had broken the law (the revealed and the natural both); they had forgotten the flood, the fire at Sodom, the plagues in Egypt and the slaughter in Palestine. Yet he followed your counsel and consented, he the Creator of men, to become a man himself. He it was who had made the laws, yet he made himself subject to the laws; he was the High Priest, but he became the Victim as well; he was the Shepherd, yet he made himself a sheep.

He made peace with you, his God and Father, reconciled the world with you and delivered all men from the threat of your wrath. Born of a virgin, born in the flesh, God the Word, the beloved Son became the

¹ i.e. Josue, the two names having the same form in Greek. [Translator]

Firstborn of all creation; as had been foretold of him in prophecy, he was of the line of David and Abraham and his tribe was Judah's. He it was who had fashioned all that was born into the world, and now he was born himself in a virgin's womb; incorporeal by nature, he put on a body; born outside of time, he was born now in time.

He lived in holiness and taught the law of God, banished from men's midst every kind of disease and infirmity, did many signs and miracles before the people. He took food and sleep and drink, fed all who needed to be fed, let every living creature eat its fill. He made your name known to those who did not know it; he dispelled ignorance and kindled the flames of piety. He achieved the task you gave him.

When he had accomplished all this, he was betrayed by one who was unaddened with evil. He fell into the hands of wicked men—priests and high priests they called themselves, but falsely—and a lawless people; who with your permission made him suffer much and inflicted on him every possible outrage. He was given up to Pontius Pilate, the governor; and the Judge was judged, the Saviour condemned, the Impassible nailed to the cross; he that was immortal by nature suffered death and the Giver of life was buried, to destroy suffering and deliver from death those for whose sake he had come, to shatter the Devil's chains and rescue men from his wiles.

He rose from the dead on the third day and having remained with his disciples for forty days, was raised up to heaven, where he took his seat at your right hand, O God, his God and Father.

Then follows the narrative of the Last Supper:

- 169 REMEMBERING what he suffered for us, we give you thanks, O God the all-powerful—not, indeed, as much as we ought, but as far as we can—and we want to fulfil the commandment he gave us.

For on the night he was betrayed, he took bread in his hands, those pure and holy hands, looked up at you, his God and Father,¹ broke the bread and gave it to his disciples, saying:

This is the mystery of the new testament. Take some and eat it: this is my body, broken for the multitudes, to remit their sins.

He mixed, too, a cup of wine and water, consecrated it and gave it to them, saying:

Drink some of it, all of you: this is my blood, shed for the multitudes, to remit their sins.

¹ Details which are also found in the Roman canon. They are not in the account of Last Supper given in the gospels.

Do this in memory of me. Every time you eat this bread and drink this cup, you will be proclaiming my death, until I come back.

Calling, then, to mind his passion and death, his resurrection from the dead, his return to heaven and the second visit he has yet to make us, when he will come with a great display of glory and power, to judge the living and the dead and to give us all what our conduct deserves, we offer you, King, this bread and this chalice; we offer them, God, as he told us to do, and through him we thank you for enabling us to stand before you as priests.

We ask you, God, to look with a kindly eye on these gifts lying before you, even though you do not need them, and to honour your Anointed by taking pleasure in them.

Send down on the sacrifice that Holy Spirit of yours who was the witness of Christ's sufferings.¹ May he declare this bread to be the body of your Christ, this chalice your Christ's blood.

Grant that those who receive it may be strengthened in devotion and have their sins remitted. May they be delivered from the Devil and his aberrations and be filled with the Holy Spirit. Once reconciled with you, may eternal life be theirs, O Lord the all-powerful.

The eucharistic prayer properly so called ends at this point. As head of the Christian community, the bishop now brings before the God whom he knows is invisibly present the main objects of the Church's petitions.

Litany

170 WE pray you, Lord, for your holy Church throughout the world, which you acquired by the precious blood of your Anointed. Keep it unshaken, untouched by the waves, until the world's allotted span is completed.

We pray you for the episcopate, the faithful teacher of the true word.

We ask your help for the thing of nought that makes you this offering and for all priests and deacons and all the clergy: we ask you to fill them all with the wisdom of the Holy Spirit.

We ask your help, Lord, for the king, for those in authority under him and for the army. May they provide us with the peace that will enable us to live the whole of our lives in tranquillity and concord and to glorify you, through Jesus Christ, our hope.

We make you this offering for all the saints who have given you pleasure from the beginning of the world, whether patriarchs, prophets, just men,

¹ An allusion to Heb. 9:14. [The actual wording, however, comes from 1 Pet. 5:1. Translator.]

apostles, martyrs, confessors, bishops, priests, deacons, subdeacons, lectors, cantors, virgins, widows or laypeople—for all of them, whatever their names, which there is no need to tell you.

We make you our offering for this community and ask you to raise it up to be a credit to Christ, a consecrated nation of kingly priests. We pray you for the virgins and those who keep themselves chaste, for the widows in the Church, for those who live in the holy state of marriage and beget children, and for those of your people who are still in their infancy: we ask you not to cast off a single one of us.

We pray you for this city and its inhabitants, for the sick and those who have the misfortune to be in slavery, for those in exile and those who have lost their goods to the state, for those at sea and those travelling by land: we ask you to defend them, to help and protect them all.

We pray you for those who hate and persecute us because we bear your name and for those astray outside the Church. Convert them to the good and calm their fury.

We pray you for the Church's catechumens, for those tried by the Adversary and for those of our brethren who are doing penance. Perfect the faith of the catechumens, cleanse the Devil-ridden from the influence of the Evil One, accept the mortifications of the penitents, forgive them their sins and forgive us ours.

We make you our offering for good weather and a fruitful harvest. May we never fail to receive our share of the good things you send, never cease to praise you because you give food to all living things.

We ask your help for those who for good reasons are not with us now. Keep us all duly devout and gather us together unshaken, blameless, without reproach, in the kingdom of your Anointed, the God of all creatures whether spiritual or merely corporal.

All glory be yours, veneration and thanksgiving, honour and worship, O Father, Son and Holy Spirit, now and for ever, throughout the unceasing, unending succession of ages.

And the whole congregation shall say:

Amen.¹

¹ The liturgy in Book VIII of the 'Apostolic Constitutions' contains three sets of litanies. The first is said by the deacon after the catechumens and penitents have left the church; the second, the one given here, is the most solemn of the three and is said by the bishop; the third (ch. 13), which is much shorter, is said by the deacon a little before the communion.

Before the Communion

The bishop says to the people:

171 HOLY things are for the holy.¹

The people answer:

One alone is holy, one alone is the Lord:
 Jesus Christ, who alone gives glory to the Father,
 Jesus Christ, for ever blessed. Amen.
 Glory to God in highest heaven,
 peace on earth, to men delight.²
 Hosannah to the Son of David.³
 Blessed is he that comes in the name of the Lord.
 The Lord is God and has appeared among us.
 Hosannah in highest heaven.

Prayer of Thanksgiving

172 LORD God, all-powerful, Father of Christ the blessed (yes, he is indeed your Child), when we ask your help sincerely you answer our prayers, and even when we are silent you know what petitions we would make. We thank you for enabling us to take part in your holy mysteries, which you gave us to perfect our faith, maintain our devotion and forgive our sins; for we are called by the name of your Christ and we live with you.

You have withdrawn us from the society of the wicked: enable us, then, to join with those who are dedicated to you; grant that the continual visitation of your Holy Spirit may ground us firmly in the truth; make good our deficiencies, consolidate what we have acquired.

Keep your priests blameless in your service, give peace to kings and justice to magistrates, make the weather temperate and the crops fruitful, watch over the whole world with your invincible providence, bring gentleness to those nations that are inclined to war and set in the right way those that have gone astray. Make all your people holy: protect the virgins, keep the married faithful, give strength to those who have made their peace with the Church, bring our children to maturity, strengthen the newly baptised, teach the catechumens and make them fit for initiation; gather us all into your kingdom in heaven, bring us together in Jesus Christ, our Lord.

To him be glory, to you and to the Holy Spirit: glory, honour and veneration throughout the ages. Amen.

¹ See the 'Apostolic Tradition', no. 158 above.

² The beginning of the Gloria.

³ The same allusion as in the Didache; see no. 155.

Final Blessing by the Bishop

- 173 O GOD all-powerful, true and incomparable, present in all things yet limited by none, uncircumscribed by place, unaged by time, unhurried by the years, not beguiled by words, not subject to birth, never in need of protection, far above corruption, admitting of no change, by nature immutable, living in light that none can approach, essentially invisible, yet known to all rational beings that ponder on you lovingly and grasped by those who seek you because you are dear to them, God of Israel the true seer, your people Israel that believes in Christ:

Be kind to us; for the honour of your name answer my prayer and bless these people whose heads are bowed before you. If what they desire is good for them, grant it to them. Do not cast any of them out of your kingdom: make them all holy, watch over them, protect and support them, deliver them from the Adversary and from all other enemies; keep guard over them as they go in and out.

To you belong glory, praise, magnificence, veneration and worship—to you and to your Child, Jesus Christ, our Lord and God and King, and to the Holy Spirit. So is it now, so will it be for ever, age after age. Amen.

Prayers for Various Occasions

A variety of prayers are to be found in Book VII of the Apostolic Constitutions also. The first thirty-two chapters are based on the Didache, the rest appear to have drawn on some ancient ritual.

Prayer in Praise of Providence

- 174 GOD eternal, Saviour, King of gods, the only Omnipotent, the only Lord, God of all creation, God of the holy fathers, the sinless ones that were before us, God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, merciful and compassionate, patient and full of pity! Every heart lies bare for you to see, no secret thought is hidden from you. The souls of the just cry out to you, the hope of the devout rests in you with confidence. You are a Father to the good, you grant the requests of those who pray to you as they ought, you know what petitions we would make even when we are silent, for the human heart is not outside your providence and your all-seeing gaze probes our intentions to the depths. From every corner of the world prayer and supplication rise to you like incense.

You have appointed this present life as an arena, with justice as the prize to be run for. You have opened the gates of your mercy to us. Through the knowledge inborn in us all, our natural judgement and the teaching of the Law, you have shown us that wealth and riches do not last for ever.

Beauty and loveliness pass away, power and strength are very easily lost: all things dissolve like smoke, all are hollow. Only the awareness that faith gives is solid and lasting; that alone, and the truth that goes with it, can take us up to heaven and put within our reach the delight that is to come. And even now, although the promised rebirth has not yet occurred, hope makes the soul rejoice and exult.

Because Abraham was walking in the true path, you appeared to him and taught him what this world is. So with him, knowledge came before faith, and faith was followed by the covenant, for you told him you would make his descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky or the grains of sand on the sea-shore. When you gave him Isaac you knew that it would be so with him too; you were called the God of Isaac, because you said to him: 'I will be your God and the God of the race that is to spring from you.' When our father Jacob was sent to Mesopotamia, you showed him Christ and, 'See,' you said, 'I am with you; I will increase and multiply your posterity; indeed I will.' And to holy Moses, your faithful servant, when you appeared to him in the bush you said: 'I am He That Is. That has been my name from all eternity and it shall stand recorded for generation after generation.'

Defender of Abraham's posterity, blessed you are, blessed you will be throughout the ages.

Prayer in Praise of all Creation¹

175 BLESSED you are, Lord, King of the ages. Through Christ you created the universe, through him in the beginning put order into the shapeless world. You divided the lower waters from the higher with a vault and breathed the breath of life into the lower ones; you made the earth stand firm and you spread out the heavens; to every one of your creatures you gave a place of its own.

By your devising, Lord, the world received brightness. The heavens, knit together like a vault,² were made splendid with stars to console us for the darkness; the sun shone to give daylight and bring the crops to maturity; the moon, waxing and waning, marked changes of season. In the one case it was named night, in the other it was called day. A vault appeared amid the bottomless depths, and you said that the waters should be gathered together and dry land come in sight.

And the sea itself: who can recount the glories of that? It comes in raging from the deep and back it flows again because you will have it away

¹ A paraphrase of Psalm 103, which sings the praises of God's creative power.

² A concept belonging to a primitive cosmogony, easily explicable when you remember how the sky looks in the east.

from the shore, for you said that its waves should break on the sands. You cut a way through it for living creatures, great and small, and for ships.

Then there is the earth, which brought forth its fruit and was filled with all kinds of flowers and patterned with trees, each differing from the others. The bright luminaries that promote the growth of these keep unswervingly to their long course and never step out of their appointed places: whatever your orders may be, they go on rising and setting, to mark the seasons and the years and to bring variety to men's labours.

Next came the different breeds of animals—those that live on land, the aquatic ones, those that fly in the air, and the amphibians; and the wisdom that created them all watches over the welfare of each. . . .

When you had finished creating, you produced a reasoning animal to live in the world, ordaining it so in your wisdom and saying: 'Let us make man as an image of ourselves, let us make him like us.' You made of him a world within the world, the splendour of all the other splendours: for the body you made him came from the four elements,¹ and the soul you endowed him with was called into being from nothingness; you gave him five senses and over them set a mind to govern them.

And in addition to all this, sovereign Lord, who can adequately describe the movement of the clouds with their load of rain, the brilliant blaze as the lightning flashes out, the crash of the thunderbolts, all designed to provide for different needs and produce the greatest variety of temperature?

When man sinned, you deprived him of the life that was to have been his prize—not that you took it away altogether, but you made it lie dormant for a time, for a little while. With an oath you called on him to be born again. You robbed death's claims of their validity, O giver of life to the dead through Jesus Christ our hope.

Thanksgiving for Sunday

176 LORD the all-powerful, you created the world through Christ and instituted the sabbath in memory of the creation; you would have men rest on that day from their labours and meditate on your Law. You instituted feast-days, too, to gladden our hearts and remind us of the wisdom that comes from you.

For our sakes Wisdom consented to be born of a woman. He made his appearance in the world; when he was baptised he showed us he was both God and man; with your consent he suffered for our sakes; through your power he died and rose again.

¹ This idea, which is found in ancient Greek philosophy, was revived in the third century B.C. by the physician Galen and was thereafter regarded as indisputable.

So, when we celebrate the feast of the resurrection on the Lord's day, we rejoice because he conquered death and shed abroad the rays of light and immortality.

Through him you brought the nations to you, to make of them a chosen people, the true Israel, God's beloved, God-regarding.

You brought our fathers, Lord, out of the land of Egypt and took them away from the iron-furnace, the clay and the brick-making.

You freed them from Pharaoh's power and his satellites', led them through the sea as though it were dry land, and fed them in the desert with good things of every kind.

You gave them the Law, the decalogue; proclaimed it with your own mouth, wrote it with your own hand.

You commanded them to keep the sabbath, which you gave them not as a pretext for idleness but as an inducement to devotion, an occasion for learning to know your power and avoiding evil: you surrounded them with this holy sequence of sevens for their instruction; you did it to give them joy every week. Yes, that is the purpose of the week, the unit of seven weeks, the seventh month, the seventh year and its periodical return, and the fiftieth year, the year of pardon.¹ It was to deprive men of all excuse for their ignorance that you told them not to work at all on the sabbath; no-one was to speak so much as an angry word on that day.

The sabbath is the rest that came after creation; it is the consummation of the world; it means searching into the Law, praising and thanking God for what he has given to men. The Lord's day is superior to all other days, because it recalls the Mediator, him that provides for us, the Author of the resurrection, the First-born of all creation, God the Word, God the man, born of Mary, alone of all men born without the help of man, him that lived a holy life, was crucified at Pontius Pilate's bidding, died and rose again from the dead.

The Lord's day is an incitement, sovereign Master, to offer you praise for all these gifts, for we have received from you the grace to become aware of your blessings in all their grandeur.

Prayer of the Newly Initiated

177 GOD the all-powerful, Father of Christ, who is your only Son, give me a clean body, a pure heart, a watchful mind and knowledge free from error. May your Holy Spirit come to me and bring me truth, yes and the fulness of truth, through your Christ.

¹ An allusion to various Jewish institutions—the sabbath, the sabbatical year, the jubilee, etc.—which foreshadowed the Lord's day.

Through him may glory be yours, in the Holy Spirit, throughout the ages.

Amen.

Evening Prayer

178 PRAISE the Lord, you that are his servants,
 praise the Lord's name.
 We praise you, sing hymns to you, bless you,
 because of your great glory,
 Lord King, Father of Christ,
 the spotless Lamb
 who took sin away from the world.
 Praise is your fitting portion,
 singing of hymns your due, and glory:
 yours, God the Father,
 through the Son and in the Spirit,
 age after age. Amen.
 Nunc dimittis. . . .¹

THE EUCHOLOGIUM OF SERAPION

Until the end of the last century, nothing was known of any collection of Egyptian liturgical material, similar to the Syrian prayers in the Apostolic Constitutions. The gap was filled by the discovery, on Mount Athos, of a euchologium containing thirty prayers, two of which bore the name of St. Athanasius' friend, Serapion of Thmuis. In all probability, the other prayers also are by the same author (c. 350).

The prayers contained in the collection are concerned with the Sunday office, the eucharist, baptism, ordinations, the blessing of the oils, and funerals. The euchologium follows in full.

THE EUCHARIST

The First Prayer on Sundays

179 WE ask for your help, Father of Christ, Lord of all that is, Creator of all the created, Maker of all that is made; we stretch out clean hands to you and lay bare our minds, Lord, before you.

Have mercy, we pray you; spare us, be kind to us, improve us; fill us with virtue, faith and knowledge.

¹ Here for the first time we have proof that Simeon's song was used at evening prayer. The custom, which has come down to our own day, is thus of the highest antiquity. For the text, see above, no. 10.

Look at us, Lord; we bring our weaknesses for you to see. Be kind and merciful to all of us here gathered together; have pity on this people of yours and show them your favour, make them equitable, temperate and pure; send out angelic powers to make this your people—all that compose it—holy and noble.

Send the Holy Spirit into our minds, I beg you, and grant that we may learn to understand the holy scriptures he inspired. May we interpret them correctly and fittingly, for the benefit of all the faithful here present.

Through your only Son, Jesus Christ, in the Holy Spirit. Through him may glory and power be yours, now and age after age. Amen.

Prayer after the Homily

180 GOD our Saviour, God of the whole universe, Lord and Creator of all that exists, Father of that only Son whom you begot as a true and living Image of yourself and sent out to help the human race, by his means calling men to you and winning them over: we pray you for the people here assembled.

Send them the Holy Spirit, and may the Lord Jesus visit them, speak in the minds of them all and prepare their hearts for faith;¹ may he draw all souls to you, O God of mercies.

Take possession, too, of the people in this town that are yours; make a real flock of them, through your only Son, Jesus Christ, in the Holy Spirit. Through him may glory and power be yours, now and age after age. Amen.

Prayer for the Catechumens¹

181 HELPER and Lord of all men, Deliverer of them that find release, Protector of the redeemed, Hope of those who come under your strong hand: you have made an end of sin; through your only Son you undid what Satan had done, frustrated his tricks and freed the prisoners he kept in chains.

We thank you for calling the catechumens to you through your only Son and giving them knowledge of you. We beg you, therefore, make their knowledge firm, that so they may come to know you, the only true God, and your envoy, Jesus Christ. May they persevere with undivided attention in learning what you have to teach them, and go on until they are fit for the bath that will bring them new birth, fit for your holy mysteries; through your only Son, Jesus Christ, in the Holy Spirit. Through him may glory and power be yours, now and age after age. Amen.

¹ This supposes the presence of people not yet baptised.

Blessing of the Catechumens¹

182 WE stretch out our hands, Lord, and beg that your own hand, your holy, lifegiving hand, may be stretched in blessing over this congregation.

They have bowed their heads before you, uncreated Father, through your only Son.

Bless this people with the blessing of knowledge² and devotion, the blessing that flows from your mysteries, through your only Son, Jesus Christ. Through him may glory and power be yours, now and age after age. Amen.

Prayer for the People³

183 WE acknowledge your excellence, O God, Lover of men; we cast our weaknesses before you and ask that strength may be given us. Forgive us the sins we did in the past, pardon our former faults and make new men of us. Grant that we may really and truly be your servants. We consecrate ourselves to you; accept us, God of truth, accept this people. Make them truly yours, make them all live blamelessly, without reproach. May they gain equality with the inhabitants of heaven and be counted as angels; may they all become elect and holy.

We ask your help for those who have faith, for those who know our Lord Jesus Christ: may they increase in faith and knowledge and learning.

We pray you for this congregation: be gracious to every member of it; make yourself known to them, show them your splendour. May they all learn to know you, the uncreated Father, and your only Son, Jesus Christ.

We pray you for all in authority: may they have peace in their time and give tranquillity to the Catholic Church.

We pray you, merciful God, for slave and free, men and women, old and young, rich and poor. Show them all how good you are, extend your kindness to all of them, have pity on them and grant them the grace of setting their course towards you.

We ask your help for travellers: send them the angel of peace⁴ for their

¹ This blessing, which was doubtless pronounced at the dismissal of the catechumens, ends the first part of the liturgy, which corresponds to our present mass as far as the creed.

² The word 'knowledge', which frequently occurs in Serapion, reminds us that these prayers come from the land of Clement and Origen. The knowledge meant is a specially intimate knowledge of God.

³ A litany which must have been in use from very ancient times. See Clement of Rome's prayer and the 'Apostolic Constitutions', 8 : 12. Cf. nos. 37 and 170 above.

⁴ The angel of peace is mentioned in the 'Apostolic Constitutions', 8 : 36 and 38.

companion, to protect them from all that may do them harm, wherever it may come from; and so let them reach their journey's end with great cheerfulness.

We ask your help for the afflicted, for prisoners and for the needy. Give relief to all of them, free the prisoners from their chains, free the needy from want; comfort them all, O Comforter and Consoler.

We pray you for the sick: give them health, let them recover from their illnesses; make them perfectly sound in body and in soul.

For you are the Saviour and Benefactor, the Lord and King of all men; to you, therefore, we pray for them all, through your only Son, Jesus Christ. Through him may glory and power be yours, in the Holy Spirit, now and age after age.

Amen.

Blessing of the Laity

184 MAY the hand that holds life and purity, the hand of the only Son, the hand that sweeps away what is evil and stays and supports what is holy, be over the heads of this congregation.

May they receive the blessing of the Spirit, heaven's blessing, the blessing of the prophets and apostles. May their bodies be blessed with chastity and purity and their souls have the grace to seek and know the mysteries and take part in them.

May they all alike have blessing through your only Son,¹ Jesus Christ. Through him may glory and power be yours, in the Holy Spirit, now and age after age. Amen.

Prayer for the Sick

185 TO you we pray, Lord, to you who watch over us, you the Author of the body and Creator of the soul, the Maker of man, the Governor, Guide and Saviour of the whole human race, you who love men enough to give them reconciliation and calm. Be kind to us; help and heal the sick, cure their diseases, raise up the downcast; glorify your holy name, through your only Son, Jesus Christ. Through him may glory and power be yours, in the Holy Spirit, now and age after age. Amen.

Blessing of the Sick

186 MERCIFUL Lord God, stretch out your hand and grant the sick the grace of healing, fit them for health, free them from the illness that now besets

¹ Note the strongly theological basis of this prayer, which asks the Father that his Son may give the blessing.

them. May they be healed in the name of your only Son; may his holy name be their remedy, may it make them sound and whole; for through him glory and power are yours, in the Holy Spirit, and yours they will be age after age. Amen.

Prayer for a Good Harvest

187 CREATOR of heaven and earth, you have studded the sky with stars and made it bright with lights, enriched the earth with fruits to satisfy men's needs, given to the race that took shape under your hands the clear light and the shining stars to enjoy, the earth's produce to feed on. We pray you, send us rain, abundant, plentiful, fertilising; and make the earth yield fruit and to spare; for we know how you love men, we know what your kindness is.

Do not forget those who call upon you; see that your holy Church, which alone is catholic, receives honour; hear our petitions and prayers and bless the whole earth, through your only Son, Jesus Christ. Through him may glory and power be yours, in the Holy Spirit, now and age after age. Amen.

Prayer for the Church

188 O LORD, God through all the ages, God of all reasoning minds, God of the pure-hearted and of those whose prayer is sincere and pure, visible and known in heaven to the pure spirits, living and worshipped on earth in the Catholic Church, praised by the holy angels and the pure of heart, your truth praised and glorified by the heavens themselves, which you made a living choir for the purpose: give life and purity to this your Church, give it heavenly powers and pure angels to help it, that the praise it offers you may be pure.¹

We ask your help for all the members of this Church. Grant them all reconciliation, give them forgiveness and remission of their sins; grant them the grace never to sin again; be as a rampart to them and make temptation powerless against them.

Have pity on the men, the women and the children of the Church. Show yourself to them all. And may the knowledge of you be written in their hearts, through your only Son, Jesus Christ. Through him may glory and power be yours, in the Holy Spirit, now and age after age. Amen.

¹ The words 'pure' and 'purity' occur no fewer than seven times in this paragraph. The prominence given to the idea obviously reflects a preoccupation in the mind of the author.

Prayer for the Bishop and the Christian Community

189 TO you we pray, Saviour, Lord, God of all flesh and Lord of every spirit, blessed yourself and Giver of all blessing: make our bishop holy, preserve him from all temptation, give him wisdom and knowledge, lead him to know you.

We ask your help also for the priests who work with him: give them holiness, wisdom and knowledge, see that their teaching is sound and make them dispense your holy doctrine rightly and irreproachably.

Sanctify the deacons, too. May they be pure in body and in soul and with a clean conscience do you their service and watch over the holy body and the holy blood.

We ask your help for the subdeacons, lectors and interpreters:¹ give strength to all the ministers of the Church; grant them pity, compassion and spiritual progress.

We pray you for those leading the eremetical life and for those who live as virgins: may they finish their course without reproach and their lives without incident; may they spend all their days in purity and holiness.

Have pity, too, on all who are married, men and women and their children as well: grant them the blessings of progress and amendment, whereby they may receive life and election, through your only Son, Jesus Christ. Through him may glory and power be yours, in the Holy Spirit, now and age after age. Amen.

Prayer on Kneeling

190 FATHER of the Only Begotten, kind, compassionate, merciful: you love mankind, you love souls, you are generous to all who turn to you. Accept, then, this prayer and give us knowledge, faith, devotion and holiness.

Curb every wayward stirring of passion and of sense in this your people, uproot all their sins, cleanse them all and pardon their offences.

We kneel to you, uncreated Father, through your only Son. Make us fair-minded and always ready to be of service. Grant that we may seek you and love you; give us the grace to study and ponder your holy utterances; hold out your hand to us, Lord, and set us on our feet. Yes, merciful God, pull us to our feet, make us look upwards, open our eyes, give us courage. May we have no need to blush or be ashamed, no cause to reproach ourselves. Revoke the sentence that stands against us, write our names in the book of life, put us with your holy prophets and apostles,

¹ The reference is to those who translated the text for the benefit of the people who did not understand the language in which it was written. St. Epiphanius speaks explicitly of them in his 'Explanation of the Faith', 20 and 21. See also the 'Pilgrimage of Etheria', 47; ed. H. Pétré, 260-2.

through your only Son, Jesus Christ. Through him may glory and power be yours, in the Holy Spirit, now and age after age. Amen.

Bishop Serapion's Prayer of Oblation

191 IT is right and proper that we should give you praise and hymns and glory uncreated Father of Jesus Christ, who is your only Son.

We praise you, God uncreated, unsearchable, ineffable, beyond the grasp of any created being.

We praise you because you are known by the Only Son, proclaimed and explained by him to created beings and known in turn by them. We praise you because you know the Son and reveal to the saints the glories that are his. We praise you because you are known by the Word you begot and are seen by the saints and understood by them after a fashion.

We praise you, Father, invisible, Giver of immortality. You are the source of life and light, the source of all grace and truth; you love men and love the poor, seek reconciliation with all men and draw them all to you by sending your dear Son to visit them.

We beg you, make us really alive. Give us the spirit of light, that we may know you, the supremely true, and your envoy, Jesus Christ. Give us the Holy Spirit and enable us to discourse at large upon your ineffable mysteries.

May the Lord Jesus and the Holy Spirit speak in us and praise you through us, for you are high above all principdoms, powers, virtues and dominations, above everything that can be named, both in this world and in the world to come.

Angels, archangels, thrones, dominations, principdoms and powers stand in their tens of thousands, their countless myriads, about you. The six-winged seraphim, the two most eminent, are by your side. Hiding their faces with two of their wings, hiding their feet with two more, with the other two flying, they cry out in praise of your holiness. Accept our acclamation when we too say with them:

Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts. Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Heaven is full, earth is full of your wonderful glory.

Lord of the virtues, fill¹ this sacrifice with the virtue of your participation. For we offer you this living sacrifice, this bloodless oblation. We offer you this bread, which is like² the body of your only Son.

¹ In the Alexandrian type of rite, the prayer is knit together by the idea of fulness, which is introduced by the Sanctus.

² This expression, which is also found in St. Ambrose, 'De Sacramentis', 5, is not a denial of the real presence of Christ; it means that the symbolism suggested by the bread is there after the consecration of the host as well as before.

This bread is like the holy body because on the night when Jesus Christ was betrayed, he took bread and broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying:

Take some and eat it: this is my body, broken for you, to remit your sins.

For that reason we too offer you bread as we represent his death, and we beg you through this sacrifice to show us your favour and be friendly to us, God of truth.

As the elements of this bread, once scattered over the mountains, were gathered together and made one, so may it be with your holy Church. Build it up from every nation, country, town and village, from every house, and make of it one living Catholic Church.¹

We offer, too, the cup, which is like the blood of the Lord Jesus, because when he took the cup after supper, he said to his disciples:

Take it and drink some of it: this is the new testament; it is my blood, shed for you, to remit your sins.

For that reason we too offer you the cup as we represent the manner of his dying.

O God of truth, may your holy Word² come down on this bread, that the bread may become the body of the Word; may he descend on this cup, that the cup may become the body of the Truth. Grant that to all who communicate, the means of life³ they receive may bring the healing of every sickness and the strength for every kind of progress and virtue; may it not lead, God of truth, to their confusion, condemnation and disgrace.

We call upon you, you the Uncreated, through your Son, in the Holy Spirit. May this people have your pity and become fit for greater things. May angels be sent to be with your people and defeat the Evil One and strengthen the Church. We pray you, too, for all who are asleep and whose names we call to mind.

Here the names are mentioned.

Make all these souls holy: you know them all. Sanctify all the souls that are sleeping in the Lord, include them in the number of your holy powers and give them a place to live in in your kingdom.

Accept, too, this people's thanksgiving and bless those who have

¹ Serapion modifies the quotation from the Didache 9:4. He is thinking not of the final gathering together and the second coming of Christ but of the return of those who have fallen away through Arianism.

² Here for once the epiclesis is addressed not to the Holy Spirit but to the Word. 'It thus seems highly doubtful,' says Dom Capelle, 'whether the epiclesis of the Logos [Word] is a legacy from the past.'

³ Cf. Ignatius, Letter to the Ephesians, 20:2.

provided the offerings and oblations. Grant health, soundness and a cheerful heart to all this congregation and let them make all manner of progress, both in soul and in body, through your only Son, Jesus Christ, in the Holy Spirit. So it was with him, so it is, so it will be, age after age, through all the endless succession of aeons. Amen.

Prayer at the Breaking of the Host

- 192 MAKE us fit to receive this communion, God of truth: give us chastity in our bodies and prudence and knowledge in our minds; give us wisdom, God of mercies, with our share of the body and blood.

For glory and power are yours, through the Only Begotten, in the Holy Spirit, and yours they will be age after age. Amen.

Prayer after the Communion of the People

- 193 WE thank you, Lord, for calling the fallen to you, choosing for your disciples men who had sinned and overlooking the sentence against us, which your kindness revoked, our conversion cancelled and the knowledge you gave of yourself annulled.

We thank you for giving us a share of your body and blood.

Bless us, bless this people, and grant that our lot may be with the body and blood, through your only Son. Through him may glory and power be yours, now and for ever, age after age. Amen.

Blessing of the People After the Breaking of the Host

- 194 I STRETCH out my hand over this people and beg that your hand, with its gift of truth, may be stretched out to bless them, God of mercies, kind God, through these mysteries. May the hand that holds prudence and power, the hand that corrects and purifies, the hand that confers holiness, bless all the members of this congregation and give them the conditions they need for their progress and amendment; through your only Son, Jesus Christ, in the Holy Spirit, now and age after age. Amen.

Prayer over the Offerings of Oil and Water¹

- 195 WE bless these creatures in the name of your only Son, Jesus Christ; we pronounce over this water and oil the name of him who suffered, was crucified, rose again and sits at the right hand of the uncreated God. Grant

¹ The 'Apostolic Tradition' also gives a blessing of oil after the prayer of consecration. See no. 162 above. The Testament of Our Lord (1. 24) puts the blessing in the same place or after the communion.

these creatures the power of healing, that all fever and disease and every work of the Devil may be driven away from those who drink or are anointed with them.

May the receiving of these creatures be a means of health and healing for those to whom they are given, in the name of your only Son, Jesus Christ. Through him may glory and power be yours, in the Holy Spirit, age after age. Amen.

*The Laying-on of Hands after the Blessing of
Water and Oil*

196 O GOD of truth, lover of men, may your people remain in communion with the body and the blood. Give life to their bodies and purity to their souls.

Give them this blessing to keep them so in communion and to strengthen the effect of the Eucharist; give them all joy and election, through your only Son, Jesus Christ, in the Holy Spirit, now and age after age. Amen.

BAPTISM

Blessing of the Water

197 KING and Lord of all things, Creator of the universe, you sent down your only Son, Jesus Christ, and gave salvation to all human creatures; when that Word of yours, who surpasses all utterance, came to live among the creatures you had made, you set them free. Look down, then, from heaven, look down now upon these waters and fill them with the Holy Spirit.¹

May your ineffable Word be in them and change their properties, making them ready to generate life when your grace has filled them, that the mystery now to be performed may not be without effect on those awaiting rebirth. Fill with your divine grace all who enter the water to receive baptism.

You who love men and are kind to them, spare what you have made, spare the creatures that are the work of your hands; take those who are to be born again and shape them after the pattern of your own divine beauty, the beauty no words can express. So filled with beauty, so born anew, may they attain salvation and be considered worthy of a place in your kingdom.

And as your only Son, the Word, entered the waters of the Jordan and

¹ As with the Eucharist, so here it is the Word who communicates the Holy Spirit to the water to make it *spiritual*.

made them holy,¹ so now may he enter these waters and make them holy channels of the spirit, that the newly baptised may cease to be flesh and blood and may become spirit, capable of adoring you, the uncreated Father, through Jesus Christ, in the Holy Spirit. Through him may glory and power be yours, now and age after age. Amen.

Prayer for the Candidates for Baptism

198 WE ask you, God of truth, to help this servant of yours; we beg you to fit him for that divine mystery, the rebirth that is beyond all telling. We offer him to you, Friend of men, we dedicate him to you.

Grant that, receiving this new birth, he may become immune from the influence of all that is evil and perverse. May he serve you in all circumstances and do what you tell him to do, under the guidance of your only Son, the Word.

Through him may glory and power be yours, in the Holy Spirit, now and age after age. Amen.

Prayer after the Renunciation

199 ALL-POWERFUL Lord, set your seal on the act of acceptance by which this servant of yours has bound himself to you; keep his conduct, his behaviour, unshakably faithful. May he no longer be enslaved to evil but serve the God of truth; may he be a subject of yours, O Creator of the universe, for ever; may it be clear that he really belongs to you.

We ask it through your only Son, Jesus Christ. Through him may glory and power be yours, in the Holy Spirit, now and age after age. Amen.

Prayer during the Anointing of the Candidate

200 SOVEREIGN Lord, Lover of men and lover of souls, merciful and compassionate, God of truth: we pursue you with our prayers, trusting in the promises of your only Son, who said, 'When you forgive men's sins, they are forgiven'; and we anoint those who have come to receive this divine regeneration.

We pray that our Lord, Christ Jesus, may give them the strength that heals and fortifies.² May he show himself to them through this anointing and take from them every sign of sin and wickedness and all the workings of Satan; may he take it all away from their souls and bodies and from their spirits. May he give them his grace and forgiveness, that being freed from

¹ See Cyril of Jerusalem, 'Cataphesis Mystagogica', 3:12; P.G. 33, col. 444.

² Strength, elsewhere attributed to the Spirit, is here asked of Christ.

sin they may live in holiness. Moulded into a new shape through this anointing, washed clean in this bath, renewed by the Spirit, may they henceforth be proof against the assaults of the Enemy and the beguilements of this life. So may they be drawn together and gathered into the flock of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, there to share with all the saints the promised inheritance.

Through him may glory and power be yours, in the Holy Spirit, now and age after age. Amen.

Prayer after the Anointing

201 LOVER of men, Benefactor and Saviour of all who turn to you, be kind to this servant of yours; take him in hand and bring him to the point where he may be born again.

May your only Son, the Word, lead him to the bath. May your servant value his new birth and may it not be void of your grace. May your holy Word stand by him and your Holy Spirit be with him, to drive all temptation away and cast it from him.

Through your only Son, Jesus Christ, may glory and power be yours, now and age after age. Amen.¹

Prayer after Baptism

202 O GOD, God of truth, God of the whole universe, God of all creation, fill this your servant with your blessing and keep him as clean as his new birth has left him. May he share the lot of your angelic powers and henceforth be called not flesh but spirit, for the gift he has received from you is divine and of sovereign efficacy. May he be kept safe for you to the end, Creator of all that is, through your only Son, Jesus Christ. Through him may glory and power be yours, age after age. Amen.

Prayer over the Oil with which the Baptised are Anointed²

203 O GOD of the powers, Helper of every soul that turns to you, and turning, finds itself under the strong hand of the Only Son: we beg you through your divine power, the power we cannot see, the power of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, to give to this oil a divine and heavenly virtue.

May the baptised, anointed with this oil and marked with the saving sign

¹ At this point the baptism itself took place. The formula used is not given.

² The titles of the prayers are given by the author of the euchologium himself. They do not always correspond very closely to the contents, as, for example, here and in no. 207.

of the Only Son—the cross through which he triumphed over Satan and the other hostile powers and put them all to flight—be renewed and regenerated in the bath that brings new birth. May they receive the gift of the Holy Spirit and, confirmed by this seal,¹ remain steadfast and immovable, safe and free from harm. May no-one ill treat them or conspire against them. May they believe and know the truth all their lives long; may they live in hope of receiving the life of heaven and ever await the eternity promised them by our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

Through him may glory and power be yours, now and age after age. Amen.

ORDINATION

Laying-on of Hands for the Ordination of Deacons

- 204 O FATHER who sent us your only Son, you have appointed a place for everything on earth. You gave rules and laws to your Church, in the interests of the flock and for its preservation. You chose bishops, priests and deacons for the service of your Catholic Church. Through your Son you singled out seven deacons and you gave them the Holy Spirit. Appoint this your servant, too, a deacon of your Catholic Church and give him the spirit of knowledge and discernment, that he may be able to do you pure and blameless service among your holy people, through your Son, Jesus Christ. Through him may glory and power be yours, now and age after age. Amen.

Laying-on of Hands for the Ordination of Priests

- 205 WE stretch out our hands, O Sovereign, God of heaven, Father of the Only Begotten, upon this man, and we pray that the Spirit of truth may dwell in him. Give him understanding and knowledge and a generous heart. May the Holy Spirit be in him and enable him to govern your people, preach your holy utterances and reconcile the people to you, you the uncreated God.

Through the spirit of Moses you gave the elect the Holy Spirit himself; give this man too the Holy Spirit, through the spirit of the Only Begotten. Give him the Spirit of wisdom and knowledge, the Spirit of right belief, that he may serve you with a clean conscience, through your only Son, Jesus Christ. Through him may glory and power be yours, now and age after age. Amen.

¹ 'Seal' is the accepted term for the Spirit, who seals the union between the baptised and God. His imprint or 'character' is impressed on the soul at confirmation.

Laying-on of Hands for the Consecration of a Bishop

206 YOU sent the Lord Jesus for the benefit of the whole world, through him you chose the apostles, and age after age you have ordained holy bishops. Make this man too a bishop, God of truth—one living to the full, a holy bishop to succeed the holy apostles—and give him grace, give him the Holy Spirit, whom you have given to all your true servants and especially to the patriarchs and prophets.

Make him fit to be the shepherd of your flock. And may he remain blameless and without reproach in the exercise of his office to the end, through your only Son, Jesus Christ.

Through him may glory and power be yours, now and age after age. Amen.

MISCELLANEOUS PRAYERS

Prayer over the Oil for the Sick¹ and over Bread and Water

207 WE ask your help, Holder of all power and strength, Saviour of all men, Father of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and we beg you to send out the power of healing from heaven (your only Son's) upon this oil. May those who are anointed with this oil and those who receive these other creatures of yours be delivered thereby from all disease and from every kind of sickness. May they be protected against all that is diabolical, may all unclean spirits be driven from them, all wicked spirits cast out of them, all fevers, chills and ill-health banished from them. May they receive that good thing, grace, and have their sins forgiven; may they have life and salvation, health and soundness of soul, body and spirit, and perfect strength.

May every Satanic power, Lord, everything diabolical, every snare of the Enemy, every scourge, all that could administer to us blows or pain or suffering or slaps, everything that could shake us, be put to flight by your holy name, which we now invoke, and by the name of your only Son. May all this be far from your servants—far from what is within them, far from what is without—that his name may have glory who was crucified for us, who rose again, who took our diseases and infirmities upon himself: Jesus Christ; who will also come to judge the living and the dead.

Through him may glory and power be yours, now and age after age. Amen.

¹ The oil for the sick was used at extreme unction. It would seem that we here have the actual prayer said when the sick person was anointed.

Prayer for the Dead

208 O GOD, you have power over life and death, you are the God of spirits and the sovereign Lord of all flesh, the God that deals out death and gives life. You lead men to the gates of hell and bring them back, you have planted a spirit in man, you are there to welcome the souls of the saints and you give them rest. You make your creatures change, you transform and transfigure them, when that is the right and profitable thing to do; you alone are incorruptible, unchanging, eternal.

We beg you to give sleep and rest to this your servant. Refresh his soul and spirit in tracts of verdure, in treasure-houses where he may rest with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob¹ and with all your saints. Raise up his body on the day you have determined on, for you have promised and you do not break your word; and then give him his portion in your holy pastures according to his deserts.

Put his transgressions out of your mind; make his departure peaceful and bless it. Assuage through the Spirit, the Giver of all consolation, the grief of those who still survive him, and give us all a good end, through your only Son, Jesus Christ.

Through him may glory and power be yours, age after age. Amen.

¹ This phrase, which we here meet with yet again, must have come from some ancient ritual and may have inspired the epitaphs in the same strain given above.

6

Liturgical Fragments

Apart from the collections of liturgical material, which take us back to the third century, we have few examples of public prayers and ancient liturgies. In any case, the degree of improvisation allowed to the celebrant, in the East at any rate, would scarcely permit the formation of stereotyped prayers. Yet a certain number of prayers for constantly recurring occasions and certain liturgical chants seem to have crystallised into set forms at a quite early date, as was the case, for example, with the evening prayer, 'Phos Hilaron', which has been used from the remotest times.

Later writers, and manuscripts like those at Grottaferrata, are continually yielding new texts—liturgical fragments, for instance, like the hymns that were sung during the communion before the practice of using psalms arose; so that they must go back to the very earliest period (fourth or fifth century). The field of discovery is still open, and the future doubtless holds pleasant surprises in store for us.

As these liturgical texts are often mere fragments, they are very difficult to date: a prayer for use at table may occur in St. John Chrysostom and yet be of a much earlier date; a fragment preserved in the apocryphal 'Testament of Our Lord Jesus Christ' may be much older than that work. These scattered fragments are here classified by subject-matter rather than by chronological order, since the time-sequence is sometimes hard to determine precisely.

The main groups are:

Communion hymns and litany

Prayers for various feasts

Morning and evening hymns

Prayers before and after meals

The Prayer of Manasses and the Cyprianic Prayers

Communion Hymns¹

I

209 LET us pray to the Lord.

This is the holy body

of Christ, the Lamb of God.

¹ Logically, the communion-prayer from an ostrakon, given as no. 105 above, might come in this section.

This is his holy body
who was betrayed and given up
for our salvation.

This is his holy body
who gave to his disciples
the grace-bringing mysteries
of the new covenant.

This is the holy body
receiving which we have received
the bloodless sacrifice.

This is his holy body
who washed with water
the apostles' feet
and cleansed their souls
with the Holy Spirit.

This is his holy body
who gave justification
to the harlot for her tears
and to us purification
through his own blood.

This is his holy body
who accepted the kiss
given in treachery
and loved the world
and suffered death for it.

This is his holy body
who willingly
was given up to Pilate
and set the Church,
immaculate, beside him.

Blessed and glorious is his name.

II

210 WE eat your holy body
which was crucified for us.

We drink your holy blood
which was shed for us.

May your body be our salvation
and your blood forgive us our sins.

Because for our sake you tasted gall,
may the Devil's spleen be turned from us.

Because for our sake you drank sour wine,
may our weakness be changed into strength.

Because for our sake you were spat upon,
may the dew of your kindness fall on us.

Because for our sake you were struck with a rod,
may we receive shelter at the last.

Because for our sake you accepted a crown of thorns,
may we that love you be crowned with garlands
that never can fade.

Because for our sake you were wrapped in a shroud,
may your invincible power enfold us.

Because of the new grave and the tomb,
may we receive renewal
of soul and body.

Because you rose and returned to life,
may we be brought to life again
and stand before you
and be justly judged.

III

211 MAY this your sacrament, Lord Jesus Christ,
bring life to us and pardon for our sins,
to us for whom you suffered your passion.

For our sake you drank gall
to kill in us the bitterness
that is the Enemy's.

For our sake you drank sour wine
to strengthen what is weak in us.

For our sake you were spat upon
to bathe us in the dew of immortality.

You were struck with a frail reed
to strengthen what is frail in us
and give us life for all eternity.

You were crowned with thorns
to crown those who believe in you
with that ever-green garland, your charity.

You were wrapped in a shroud
to clothe us in your all-enfolding strength.

You were laid in a new grave
to give us new grace in ages likewise new.

IV

212 THIS is his blood who took flesh
of the holy virgin:
Jesus Christ.

This is his blood who was born
of the God-bearing saint:
Jesus Christ.

This is God's blood whom men saw
and demons fled from:
Jesus Christ.

This is his blood who was baptised
in the Jordan by John the forerunner:
Jesus Christ. Amen.

This is his blood who offered himself
a sacrifice for our sins:
Jesus Christ. Amen.

V

213 WE have received
your holy body,
we have drunk
your precious blood.
May they bring us, Lord,
forgiveness
and not condemnation.
O grant us salvation.

VI

214 GREAT is the mystery, Lord,
of your resurrection.

What you are receiving is the body of Christ,
what you are drinking, the source of immortality. Alleluia.

When he had eaten, the Immortal
went out to his death.

What you are receiving is the body of Christ,
what you are drinking, the source of immortality. Alleluia.

Then he did battle with hell,
and hell was beaten
and gave up its captives.

What you are receiving is the body of Christ,
what you are drinking, the source of immortality. Alleluia.

Mary had anointed him:
he showed himself to her.
She saw and worshipped her God
before his tomb.

What you are receiving is the body of Christ,
what you are drinking, the source of immortality. Alleluia.

Go, Mary, tell Peter,
tell the other apostles:
The Lord that cannot die
has risen from the dead.

What you are receiving is the body of Christ,
what you are drinking, the source of immortality. Alleluia.

VII

215 NOW with hearts overflowing
make for the Lord's house:
you the new Israel.
Clean now of heart,
fear him and give him glory.

He made all that is, yet here
he dies in mystery,
slain by the hands of his priests.
What suffering he knew
whose godhead cannot grieve.

Tireless the cherubim
offer him prayer and praise.
High he sits above them,
yet on the altar
priests and deacons handle him.

Beyond belief
the wonder here contrived,
but we, believing him,
believe in it.

Beyond the reach of thought and word,
he dwells in flesh,
and when he gives his flesh to us,
he gives himself.
Now faithful hands enclose
the God who made the world.

The bread that feeds the heavens
is here on the altar:
the God who cannot die is killed,
is killed for sacrifice
in this mystery.
This food he gives brings life
to those who caught their death
from what was once their food in Eden.

The blood that streams from him he pours
into the chalice.
The priest of the new dispensation
makes it a sacred oblation;
the faithful take it
and wash themselves clean.

One with his Father,
now as of old,
he opens his heart
to the world.

When he comes back, may he find us
fit for his presence.
May the mother of God plead our cause,
may the holy apostles.
May we through his mercy find admittance
to the ranks of the saints.

Litany

The deacon says:

- 216 LET us pray for peace, which is heaven's gift. May the Lord in his mercy give us peace.
- Let us pray for faith. May the Lord give us grace to keep our faith in him untainted to the end.
- Let us pray for unity of hearts and minds. May the Lord keep our minds and hearts as one.
- Let us pray for patience. In all our afflictions may the Lord grant us patience to the end.
- Let us pray for the apostles. May the Lord make us please him as they pleased him; may he fit us to receive the inheritance they have received.
- Let us pray for the holy prophets. May the Lord add us to their number.
- Let us pray for the holy confessors. The Lord grant that we may end our lives in the same frame of mind as they did.
- Let us pray for the bishop. May our Lord grant him a long life and keep him true to the faith, that breaking the bread of truth as he ought, he may preside over the Church blamelessly and without reproach.
- Let us pray for priests. May God not take the spirit of the priesthood from them, but grant them zeal and piety to the end.
- Let us pray for deacons. The Lord grant that they may stay the course and attain holiness; and may he bear their labours and their charity in mind.
- Let us pray for deaconesses. May the Lord answer their prayers and fill their hearts with all spiritual blessings and support them in their labours.
- Let us pray for subdeacons and lectors. May the Lord give them patience and reward them for it.
- Let us pray for the faithful throughout the world. The Lord grant that they may keep the faith whole and entire.
- Let us pray for the empire. May the Lord grant it peace.
- Let us pray for princes. The Lord grant that they may know him and fear him.
- Let us pray for the whole world. May the Lord provide for all creatures and give to each what is best for it.

PRAYERS FOR VARIOUS FEASTS

From a Christmas Liturgy

217 THE Radiance of the Father's splendour, the Father's visible Image, Jesus Christ our God, peerless among counsellors, Prince of peace, Father of the world to come, the model after which Adam was formed, for our sakes became like a slave: in the womb of Mary the virgin, without assistance from any man, he took flesh. For our sakes he was wrapped in swaddling-clothes, laid in a manger and praised by the angelic powers.

'Glory to God in high heaven,' they sang; 'peace and good will to men.'

Enable us, Lord, to reach the end of this luminous feast in peace, forsaking all idle words, acting virtuously, shunning our passions and raising ourselves above the things of this world.

Bless your Church, which you brought into being long ago and attached to yourself through your own life-giving blood. Help all orthodox pastors, heads of churches and doctors.

Bless your servants, whose trust is all in you; bless all Christian souls, the sick, those tormented by evil spirits, and those who have asked us to pray for them.

Show yourself as merciful as you are rich in grace; save and preserve us; enable us to obtain those good things to come which will never know an end.

May we celebrate your glorious birth, and the Father who sent you to redeem us, and your Spirit, the Giver of life, now and for ever, age after age. Amen.

The Presentation

218 FROM all eternity, O Jesus Christ, you have been our Lord and our God: so did the Father will it. Yet in this, the last of all periods of time, you also had your birth; you were born of a virgin, of one that had no knowledge of any man. To redeem us from the Law, you submitted to the Law. Your purpose was to free us from the slavery to which our corruption had reduced us and to confer upon us the rank of sons.

This is the day when you were carried to the temple and the aged Simeon took you in his arms and asked leave to go in peace. 'My own eyes have seen', he said, 'your grace and your saving power.'

Deliver us, now, Lord, from all that is vain; fulfil your promise and free us from sin and shame; fill our hearts with your holy Spirit and enable us to say: 'Abba, Father.'

Make us true sons of your Father. Protect us against all the evil in the world. Grant that we may celebrate this feast in peace. Accept your servants' petitions, as you accepted the confession of Anna, the prophetess. Instead of a pair of turtle-doves or two young pigeons, take the pure homage of the worship we offer you. And fill us with the good things that are in your kingdom. All this we ask with your mother and holy old Simcon, with Anna the prophetess and all the other saints.

For Holy Saturday

219 TODAY we have seen
our Lord Jesus Christ on the altar.
Today we have gained possession
of the burning coal in whose shadow
the cherubim sing.
Today we have heard
a voice say, sweet and strong:

This body burns the thorns
of sin.
This body gives light to the souls
of all believers.
This body the woman touched
that had the flux of blood,
and gone was her bitter anguish.

This body the Canaanite's daughter
saw and was healed.
This body the harlot approached
with eager heart,
and all her filthy sins
were washed away.
This body Thomas touched and cried:
'My Lord, my God.'
Great is this body and more than great
the salvation it brings us.

The Word who is life
said also: 'This is my blood,
shed for you, poured for you,
bringing you pardon for sin.'

We have drunk, beloved, this blood;
it is holy and deathless.

We have drunk, beloved, the blood
that flowed from his side,
that heals all disease and gives freedom
to every soul.

We have drunk the blood
that ransomed us, redeemed us,
gave us light and knowledge.

See, children, what a body
we have eaten, see what blood
we have drunk, what a covenant
we have made with our God.
O to be proof against shame
on the day of requital.

Who can sufficiently praise
the mystery of your grace?
We have been enabled
to take our share of the gift;
may we keep it safe to the end,
that so we may come to hear
the blessed voice,
the sweet, the holy, saying:
Come, you that have received
a blessing from my Father;
take possession of the kingdom
that awaits you.

Then they that crucified the Lord
will be afraid,
and they that have not believed
in Father, Son and Holy Spirit
will be ashamed,
they that have denied and not acknowledged
the holy Trinity in the one godhead.

But we, beloved, will celebrate, as we ought,
Christ's baptism and his holy resurrection,
that gave us life and gave the world salvation:
which may we all achieve through Jesus Christ,
our Lord, and through his grace and kindness.
Glory, worship, honour are his due.

The Easter Festival

I

220 THIS is the Pasch:
holy the feast we celebrate today.
New and holy is the Pasch,
mystic,
all-venerable,
and Christ, who redeemed us,
is the paschal victim.
The Pasch breathes balm,¹
is great,
was made for the faithful;
the Pasch opens to us
the gates of paradise.
O Pasch, sanctify all believers.
O Christ, preserve the pope of Rome.

II

221 WE praise the Pasch, the Pasch, the Pasch:
because our paschal victim,
Christ our God, the only immortal,
the only invisible, inexpressible,
has died in sacrifice for us.

Angels, principalities,
dominions, powers,
virtues, cherubim and seraphim praise him.
We with them
praise and worship you,
O Lord our God,
we your unworthy servants.

For when time was almost over,
you came on earth and took flesh
of our holy, spotless Lady,
Mary the God-bearing, ever virgin;
you submitted to the cross and set us free
from the curse the tree had brought us.

¹ * *Αρωμαρον*: a plant used for embalming the dead.

What can we give you for all these blessings,
God as you are by nature, Father to us by grace?

We give you the fruit of our lips and we say to you:
Glory to you for your baptism.
Glory to you for your cross.
Glory to you for your burial.
Glory to you for rising and raising us with you.
Glory to you, to your Father who had no beginning,
to your holy, all-holy, life-giving Spirit,
now and for ever.

Morning Hymn

THE GLORIA

The Gloria is a Greek hymn of the highest antiquity. It formed part not of the eucharistic liturgy but of the morning office. When it reached Rome, it was inserted in the mass and the text was slightly altered.

In the version contained in the 'Apostolic Constitutions', the prayer is addressed to the Father, but it now seems certain that the oldest version of all is the one found in the 'Codex Alexandrinus' among the liturgical chants following the psalter.

222 GLORY in the heights to God,
on earth peace,
to men favour.
We praise you,
bless you,
worship you,
laud you,
we give you thanks
for your great glory,
O lord, King of heaven,
God the Father all-powerful,
Lord the only Son,
Jesus Christ,
and you, Holy Spirit.

O Lord God,
God's Lamb,
the Father's Son,
you take the world's sins away:
have mercy on us.

You take the world's sins away:
accept our prayer.
You sit at the Father's right hand:
have mercy on us.

For you alone are holy,
you alone are Lord,
O Jesus Christ,
for God the Father's glory.
Amen.

Evening Hymn

The following hymn is still used as an evening prayer in the Greek Church. It seems to go back to an even earlier date than the Gloria. In his treatise on the Holy Spirit, 29: 33, St. Basil says of it: 'Our fathers did not think it right to receive this boon of light at evening in silence. The moment it appeared, they would bless God for it. Who was the author of this hymn of thanksgiving we cannot say; but it is very old and the people still sing it.'

223 INSPIRING Light, O holy glory
of the undying, heavenly Father,
the holy, the blessed,
Jesus Christ:
the sun has set and now,
seeing the lamp that lights the evening,
we praise the Father and the Son
and God the Holy Spirit.

Praise is your meed at all times
from dutiful lips,
O Son of God, O Giver of life.
Therefore does the world give you glory.

Other Morning Hymns

224 DAY after day I will bless you;¹
I will praise your name for ever,
yes, for ever.
Out of your goodness, Lord,
keep me from sin today.

¹ The fact that quotations from the Bible form the very fabric of these prayers shows that they must be of great antiquity.

Blessed you are, Lord, God of our fathers,
worthy you are of praise.
Glorious your name for ever. Amen.

225 BLESSED you are, Lord;
show me what you want me to do.
Lord, you have been our refuge
from generation to generation.
Lord, have mercy on me
—I ask as I have asked before—
heal this soul that has sinned against you.
Teach me to do your will,
for you are my God.
In you is the source of all life;
in you is the light
whereby we shall see light.
Forever show your mercy
to them that have come to know you.

Doxology

226 PRAISE is your due,
hymns are your due,
glory is due to you, Father,
Son and Holy Spirit,
due to you always.
Amen.

PRAYERS BEFORE AND AFTER MEALS

Prayer Before Meals

227 BLESSED you are, Lord:
you have fed me from my earliest days;
you give food to every living creature.
Fill our hearts with joy and delight;
let us always have enough
and something to spare for works of mercy
in honour of Christ Jesus, our Lord.
Through him may glory, honour and power
be yours for ever. Amen.

Another Prayer Before Meals

Before the meal:

228 WE thank you, Father, for the holy resurrection, which you made known to us through Jesus, your Child. As the ingredients of the bread on this table, though once separate, were gathered together and made one,¹ so may your Church be built up from the ends of the earth and gathered into your kingdom; for power and glory are yours through all the endless succession of ages. Amen.

After the meal:

Of his great mercy and compassion, the Lord has given food to them that fear him.

Glory to Father, Son and Holy Spirit, now and for ever, age after age.²

O God the all-powerful and you, Jesus Christ our Lord, your name is above every other name.

We give you thanks and praise because you have enabled us to take our share of that good gift of yours, the food that nourishes our bodies. We beg and beseech you, Lord, to give us heavenly food as well.

Grant that we may also fear and venerate your dread and glorious name and never disobey your commandments. Write your laws and decrees in our hearts. Make us holy in spirit, soul and body through your dear Child, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Through him may glory, honour and worship be yours through all the endless succession of ages. Amen.

Monastic Thanksgiving

229 GLORY to you, Lord;

Holy One, glory to you;

glory, King, to you:

you have given us food, for our delight. Fill us with the Holy Spirit and enable us to please you. May we have no cause for shame when you deal out to us the rewards our deeds deserve.

Prayer Before the Midday Meal on Sundays

230 O LORD our God, you rose from the dead³ and raised Adam, the first of your creatures, with you; you gave life to the world. Bless the bread now

¹ To the Christian, meals always have a eucharistic atmosphere about them.

² An ancient doxology.

³ The Resurrection is mentioned because the prayer is meant to be said on Sundays.

lying before us; bless the people standing round the table, and give them a reward in heaven. Guard this household and all who live as the faith bids them live; keep them safe from all evil and from every snare the Enemy may set to catch them; let them rejoice in your grace and mercy.

Another Prayer for Use Before Meals

- 231 ALL-POWERFUL Lord, our fathers' God, to those who love you you give every conceivable blessing. When your people were in the desert, you gave them manna, sent them bread from heaven to fill them; and you so blessed the five barley loaves that they provided a feast for five thousand people. Bless these offerings too, and give to those who have given them all the good things they lack. Gladden their hearts with a well-stocked larder, that they may have something to give to the needy.

For power and glory are yours through all the endless succession of ages. Amen.

A Prayer Before Meals

- 232 O LORD our God, you are the Bread that is eaten in heaven, the Bread that gives life, the Food that really nourishes the whole world. You came down from heaven and gave the world life; you guide us through this present existence, and you have promised that there will be another for us to enjoy after this. Bless, then, our food and drink and enable us to take them without sinning. May we receive them thankfully and give you glory for them, for you it is who confer all good gifts upon us.

Blessed and glorious is your name, ever worthy of honour.

A Prayer After Meals

- 233 TO you, the true God, the God who loves men, we sinners your unworthy servants give thanks, filled as we are with the gifts you so abundantly make us. We beg you, Sovereign Lord, enable us also to take our share, with the good all over the earth, of the gifts you bestow in heaven, through the intercession of your spotless mother and of all your saints.

For power and glory are yours through all the endless succession of ages. Amen.

Another

- 234 O GOD, you have fed us from our earliest days; you give food to every living creature; all good things are in your gift and you provide us with all that we need in life. Grant that we may always accept your presents gladly and turn our superfluous possessions into a source of blessing, just as

those who have entertained us now in honour of your holy name have obtained your blessing thereby. Fill their stores with the good things that are yours to give, and keep them ever devoted in spirit to you, for the glory of your all-holy name, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

PRAYERS FOR VARIOUS OCCASIONS

Thanksgiving for the First Fruits

- 235 THANKFULLY, Lord God, we offer you these early fruits, which you have given us to eat. You have brought them to maturity through your Word; you have called fruit of all kinds into being, to give pleasure and nourishment to men and indeed to all living beings everywhere on earth. We praise you, God, for all the blessings you have given us, we praise the whole creation for its manifold fertility, through your Child,¹ Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Through him may glory be yours throughout the unending succession of ages.

Prayer Before a Journey

- 236 O GOD, our own God, true and living Way: as you went with your servant Joseph on his travels, so, Master, guide this your servant on his present journey. Protect him against trying circumstances, bad weather and every stratagem that may be directed against his welfare. Give him peace and strength; grant him the prudence he needs if he is to act as he ought, in accordance with your commandments. Bring him back home rich in the goods of this world and in heaven's blessings.

For kingship, power and glory are yours, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, now and always, age after age. Amen.

The Widows' Prayer in the Night

- 237 HOLY, holy God, sinless and living in light, God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, God of Enoch and of David, of Moses and Josue and all the other prophets who faithfully preached your name;

God of the apostles; God at whose bidding all things move as you think it best for them; whose blessing falls on those who love you enough to trust you utterly: my soul praises you with the energy it draws from the Spirit; my heart praises you, Lord, and would praise your power unceasingly; the whole of my being praises you, Lord, because if you will it so, God, I shall be yours.

¹ The occurrence of this expression proves that the prayer is an ancient one.

God of the poor, helper of the insignificant, you watch over the humble and aid the weak. Help me then, Lord, since your grace has made me pleasing to you. Let me be your servant, since you let me bear the great name of Christian. If you freed me from slavery, it was to give me the chance of serving the God of Might for ever, of singing the praises of him who sees everything. If I did not do so, I should not know where to look.

Heal the wounds in my heart, Lord God; strengthen my heart until it comes to perfection, through the Holy Spirit.

Give us back our youth and enable us to build up your holy Church, O Son, the Father's Word and Understanding.

O Christ, you came to save the human race; you died, were buried and rose again; you received glory from him that sent you. Turn, then, and help us, Lord. May we think the thoughts we ought to think, guided by faith made strong by the Spirit. For our hope is in your Father and you and in the Holy Spirit, as it always will be, throughout the unending succession of ages. Amen.

All together say:

Amen.

Prayers Before Going to Bed

- 238 BE off, Satan, from this door and from these four walls. This is no place for you; there is nothing for you to do here. This is the place for Peter and Paul and the holy gospel; and this is where I mean to sleep, now that my worship is done, in the name of the Father and of the Holy Spirit.

For the same occasion:

In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, send me your Spirit; instil the wisdom of your Holy Spirit into my heart; protect my soul and body, every limb in my body, every fibre of my being, from all possible harm and all traps the Devil may set me and every temptation to sin. Teach me to give you thanks, O Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Prayer at Harvest-time

- 239 LORD God, out of your kindness to men, bless the fruits you have given us and bless your servants here gathered for the work of the harvest. Grant salvation, too, to those who possess these fruits, that having the abundance that comes from you, they may show to the poor the kindness that is also yours. To that end, accept the worship of us all.

Aloud:

For all glory is yours, Father, Son and Spirit. . . .

THE PRAYER OF MANASSES

The Prayer of Manasses, which is found inserted in the 'Didascalia', is of Jewish origin but, in Cabrol's opinion, may have been adapted to fit the needs of penitents. It is at any rate a relic of the ante-Nicene period. It was used in the African liturgy, and in the Greek liturgy it was prescribed for the office of compline.

240 ALL-POWERFUL Lord, God of our fathers Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and of the just among their descendants: you made heaven and earth and all the splendour of them, chained up the sea with one word of command, closed the abyss and sealed it with your dread and glorious name. The whole creation fears you and trembles at your power, because your glory is too great for it to bear, and sinners cannot face the anger in your threats.

But the mercy behind your promise is boundless and unfathomable; you are the Lord most high, long-suffering, patient, easily forgiving men their sins.

Of your great kindness, Lord, you promised to forgive those who were sorry they had sinned against you; of your great mercy, you declared that sinners should be saved by repentance. You did not decree that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob should repent, for they were just and had not sinned against you; but you do prescribe repentance for me, because I am a sinner—my sins, indeed, are more numerous than the grains of sand on the sea-shore. I have fallen so often, Lord, and I am not fit to raise my eyes to heaven because I have so many sins on my conscience.

The weight of the iron chains that bind me bows me down, so that I cannot lift up my head; I dare not even breathe, because I have provoked your anger and done evil in your presence.¹ I have not done what you wanted me to do, I have not carried out your orders; I have done wrong and offended you over and over again.

And now I bend my knees before you and bend my heart to you as well. I appeal to your kindness. I have sinned, Lord, I have sinned; I admit my baseness.

I beg you, Lord, forgive me; forgive me, and do not destroy me as well as my sins. Do not be angry with me for ever or condemn me and cast me into the depths of the earth.

You are indeed the God of the repentant. Your treatment of me shows how kind you are: in your great mercy, you would save even such a wretch as I.

¹ This phrase has passed into one of the responsories in the third Nocturn of the office for the third Sunday after Pentecost.

I will sing your praises all the days of my life, like the armies of heaven, which never cease to acclaim your greatness.

Glory to you throughout the ages. Amen.

THE SO-CALLED CYPRIANIC PRAYERS

We possess two prayers attributed (wrongly, as it happens) to a legendary character called Cyprian, who was supposed to have been a magician before he was converted to Christianity. His legend inspired Calderon and Goethe's Faust.

According to Lundberg, La Typologie baptismale dans l'ancienne Église, pp. 60-62, the Latin text of these prayers was used to move the catechumens to repentance and to implore God to forgive them before they were baptised.

The use in prayer of examples or models taken from the Bible was widespread among the Jews and from them it passed into the Christian formularies.

I

241 HOLY, holy, holy, Most Holy One, our fathers' Father, God of Abraham, God of Isaac, God of Jacob, God of the apostles, God of the prophets, God of virgins, God of those who live as they ought to live, God of those who believe, God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is your Son: humbly we call upon you.

Humbly we make you our prayers, O Son, the Only Begotten, proceeding from the Father's lips before the world had taken shape, born—O mystery—from the womb of Mary, the holy virgin. Grant, we pray, that we may make progress in the spiritual life, that holy desire may increase in us and that we may be sound of heart; for souls reborn in the bath that brings salvation ought to stay immune from sin, the work of the flesh. We ask that there may be no stain on our faith, no perversity in our minds, no weakness in our devotion, no relaxation in our pursuit of good works or in our love. Rather, may we be strong members of your holy Church.

To you we bend our knees and bow our heads, before whom the angels and archangels, the martyrs in their thousands, the choir of apostles and the glorious prophets jump for joy; to whom all the birds sing praises; whom every tongue confesses in heaven, on earth and in the world below; whose existence is felt even by things without feeling. You alone exist, and apart from you and outside of you no one exists.

We pray you, Lord, all-powerful Father, seen of none but the Son and served by angels and archangels; we pray you, Lord and Father, to grant us spiritual integrity, absolute purity, real devotion and holy, reasonable, pure, impartial consciences, strengthened by faith against the wiles of the world. Arm our hearts against the dangers that come to us from the Devil and

against the enticements of the flesh. May we not be caught in the deadly toils of the Enemy, the violent, the blood-loving; may we bear intact the seal of eternal salvation.¹

Drive away from us all the uncleanness of the world and all the insinuations of the Devil.

May the Devil be caught in a trap and brought low; may we master him and put him out of our way, like your holy angel Raphael, who drove out of your servant Sara the wickedest of wicked spirits, Asmodeus.

As you stood by Tobias, so in your kindness stand by me.

As you showed mercy to the three young men in the furnace and to Daniel, so, in your kindness, show mercy to us your servants.

You raised the dead to life, gave sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, speech to the dumb; you enabled the lame to walk and you made lepers whole.

Deal with us your servants as you dealt with them, for we believe with all our minds that you were born, that you suffered and that you will come to judge the living and the dead.

Stand by us, as you stood by your apostles in prison, by Thecla at the stake,² by Paul under persecution and by Peter on the waves.

From the seven thrones where you sit at the Father's right hand, look down on us and deliver us from eternal death and destruction. O supremely One, Father in the Son, Son in the Father, and Holy Spirit: through the Holy Spirit and with him, in holy Church,³ honour, virtue, splendour, majesty, power, blessing and immortality are yours now and always will be, for all eternity, through all the endless ages. Amen.

II

242 HOLY Lord, holy Father, holy God, my own holy God: who is greater than you? I give you thanks and praise, God of Abraham, God of Isaac, God of Jacob, God of our fathers, God of the apostles, God of the prophets, God of the martyrs.

God of the living, you existed before the world was given shape. You will come and judge the living and the dead. You are the true God; the ceremonial seat on which you sit is formed of cherubim and seraphim. You look out into the depths.

¹ An allusion to confirmation, the *σφραγίς* or seal of the Holy Spirit. See Per Lundberg, *La Typologie baptismale dans l'ancienne Église*, Uppsala, 1942, p. 62.

² An allusion to the apocryphal Acts of Paul.

³ A reminiscence of the 'Apostolic Tradition' and of the ancient form for conferring baptism. See no. 156 above.

You see everything before it comes into being; you have the power to destroy things and to set them up again; you can make the dry land green.

You rule supreme, Lord, over all that is. Deliver me from this world and answer my prayer, as you answered the children of Israel in the land of Egypt—and even so, they did not trust you, or your servant Moses either.

What do I not deserve for my sins? When you decide to break the earth in pieces, in what cleft rock shall I hide from your might? To what mountain shall I say, 'Fall on me', to what hill, 'Hide me from the Lord I fear', when you come to shatter the earth? Help me, Lord, I beg you. Do not judge me by what I have done: I have not obeyed your directions at all.

Answer my prayer, as you answered Jonas¹ when he prayed to you from the whale's belly; yes, answer me as you answered him, and bring me from death to life. The Ninevites did penance in the Lord's sight in hairshirts and ashes. I too confess my sins to you; have mercy on me too, for you love men to repent.

David said: 'Lord, for the honour of your name efface the record of my sins.' I too beg your majesty to efface the record of mine.

Answer my prayer, as you answered when the three young men Ananias, Azarias and Misael, prayed to you from the red-hot furnace and you sent your angel with a shower of dew to frustrate the designs of Nabuchodonosor, who was ruling the kingdom at the time; for you are the King of kings and Lord of lords, you alone have immortality and dwell in unapproachable light, which no man has ever seen or ever can see.

Answer my prayer, as you answered Daniel when he prayed to you from the lion-pit and you sent Habacuc, the prophet, who brought him his dinner and said: 'Eat the dinner that the Lord has sent you'; to which Daniel replied: 'The Lord will not forsake those who seek him.'

Answer my prayer, as you answered Tobias and Sara when they prayed to you in the courtyard of their house and the angel Raphael offered their prayers for them. Answer my prayers too and admit my petitions to your holy presence; send your holy angel at once to take my sins away, as he took the unclean spirit from Sara, Raguel's daughter; and give light to my mind, as you did to the eyes of Tobias.

Answer my prayer, as you answered Susanna when she fell into the

¹ The first of a series of examples or models drawn from sacred history to strengthen the confidence of the person praying. This kind of prayer was known to the Jews before Christian times.

hands of the elders and prayed for deliverance. Deliver me from this world, for purity of conscience is a delight to you.

Answer my prayer, as you answered Ezechias, the king of Juda, and took away his sickness. Take away the sickness from my flesh, and increase my faith as you increased the length of his life by fifteen years. Deliver me from this world as you delivered Thecla from the amphitheatre; deliver me from all weakness of the flesh.

I make my petitions to you, majestic Father, who in this the last of the ages have shown us your mercy by sending us Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord and Saviour, born of Mary the virgin through the Holy Spirit, as Gabriel said he would be—Jesus Christ, through whom you have freed us from the danger of imminent death.

To you too I make my petitions, Son of the living God, who have done so many wonders. At Cana in Galilee you changed water into wine, for Israel's sake; you opened the eyes of the blind, gave hearing to the deaf, restored to paralytics the use of their limbs, loosened stammering tongues, healed the possessed, enabled the lame to run like deer, cured a woman of a flux of blood, raised the dead to life, walked on the sea and gave your hand to Peter when he stumbled. You created the sea itself and prescribed a limit for it; 'To this point,' you said, 'you shall come, and here you shall break with all your force.' To you I pray, Son of the living God, for the forgiveness of all my sins, to you who are in heaven, the Son in the Father, as the Father is in you, and was and will be eternally.

The ceremonial seat on which you sit is formed of cherubim and seraphim. Around you angels stand, and archangels, their numbers numberless, in awe and fear of your glory and power. 'Holy, holy, holy,' they say, 'is the Lord God Sabaoth.'

You yourself made a bargain with us when you said: 'Ask, and the gift will come; knock, and the door shall be opened to you. Whatever you ask my Father in my name, I ask my Father to give you.' I ask, then, and I expect the gift to come; I seek, and I expect to find; I knock, and I expect the door to be opened to me; I ask in your name, and I expect you to ask the Father to give me what I ask. For the honour of your name I am ready to offer the sacrifice of my blood and to undergo any torture that may be inflicted on me.

You always listen to me, Lord, you are my defender: defend me from my enemy. May your angel of light protect me, for you said: 'What you confidently ask in prayer will be given you.'

Men are all unreliable, but you are true to your word. You promised, Lord, and you have the power, to give me that heavenly sacrament of yours that will make me fit to see the faces of your saints. May your Spirit work in me and your will be done in me, for I have promised to be yours all the days of my life.

You gave a supremely valid testimony when you suffered at Pontius Pilate's hands, you were crucified, you went down to hell, you drew death's sting. Death was beaten, our enemy the Devil was beaten.

You rose from the dead and appeared to your apostles, you sit at the right hand of the Father, you will come to judge the living and the dead. You are assured of the mastery: deliver me from the power of him that would injure my soul. By the virtue of your name, deliver me from the power that works against me and give me the means of overcoming my enemy.

You are a powerful protector, and when our prayers and petitions come from the heart, you make yourself their advocate. Intercede for my sins day and night; bring my prayers before your Father.

And you, Lord, holy Father, be kind to me; look at my prayers in a favourable light, as you looked at Abel's offerings. In your kindness, deliver me from eternal fire and punishment and from all the other torments you have in store for the wicked. I ask it through the good and blessed Jesus Christ, our Saviour, through whom may praise and power and glory be yours throughout all ages. Amen.¹

¹ The prayer follows the same lines as the eucharistic anaphoras.

Part Three

PRAYERS COMPOSED BY THE
FATHERS OF THE CHURCH

I

The Greek Fathers

During the century that separated Origen from the two Cappadocian Gregories, the conditions in which the Christian life was lived had changed. Constant danger had been succeeded by peace, persecution by state protection, the testimony of blood by the testimony of orthodoxy in the face of the heresies which were then tearing Christendom in pieces.

Henceforward the great bishops—who were also the great doctors—put at the service of God's word minds that had been highly educated in the secular sphere. Basil and Gregory of Nyssa had been steeped in Plato before they began to study Scripture. Synesius remained attached to his pagan past even when he was Bishop of Ptolemais. Chrysostom was applauded by his hearers at Constantinople—a thing which had not happened even to the great Origen—for he not only brought them the teaching of the Church; he gave them a taste of the joys of the mind as well.

It is not often that prayer wells up in the homilies of the Fathers. The personal element gives way in them before the need of fulfilling the mission to teach. Liturgical prayer received the bishops' attention before private prayer; their great concern was to enrich the liturgies. Gregory of Nazianzus, and Basil particularly, devoted all their efforts and their piety, with its strongly theological cast, to that end.

Instead of spontaneous prayers, we find a large number of hymns, more studied in style, less biblical in inspiration. Gregory of Nazianzus aimed at endowing Christian literature with poems which would make a good showing side by side with secular poetry. Whatever may be said of their poetic value, they certainly testify to the prayerful habits of their author; but they have neither the spontaneity nor the close texture of the prayers produced in the century before. And when we have finished reading them, we still feel slightly unsatisfied.

ATHANASIUS

(†373)

Athanasius, the most illustrious of the Egyptian bishops, was one of the noblest characters in the ancient Church, and he set his mark on it as deeply as any. Born in 295, at Alexandria, he was first deacon and then secretary to his bishop, Alexander. He was present at the Council of Nicaea, where his knowledge of theology attracted attention.

As Bishop of Alexandria, he defended the divinity of Christ as it had been defined at Nicaea and went into exile for it.

His literary output was enormous, especially in connection with the fight against the Arian heresy. The following hymn to virginity is taken from a work the existence of which is known to us from a few fragments.

Hymn to Virginity

243 VIRGINITY is a symbol of God, for he too is uncorrupt. It is like the tree of life.

Virginity is finer than any purple dye. It is the very face of God.

Virginity shines like a crown; it is the King's sceptre.

Virginity is a tuneful instrument, and the music it plays is a marvellous mystery.

Brave are the garlands that crown its victories,
brave the show it makes in battle.

Virginity gives light to its lovers beyond all telling.

Virginity is close to God, but men despise it.

Virginity is radiant splendour. It belongs to the life lived in heaven.

Virginity is a temple for God, a house for the great King.

Virginity is the Almighty's tent. It is his pleasure-garden.

Worthy it is to receive the Lord's blessings.

Virginity belongs to the family of God the immortal. It is his heir.

Christ, men's Creator, reposed in virginity,
his victory over death once achieved.

Virginity is a fruitful tree, a continual delight.

Virginity is the Almighty's pleasure-garden. It is his house. . . .

Virginity is the splendour of God and the pride of the angels.

Great is the beauty of the virginal life and spirit,
and great the promised reward of virginity,
the solid ground where stands the King.

GREGORY OF NAZIANZUS

(†390)

Gregory studied Greek literature in the schools of Alexandria and Athens, where he formed a close friendship with Basil and began to live the Christian life in earnest. His father, who was Bishop of Nazianzus, ordained him priest. Basil insisted on giving him the bishopric of Sasima, in Asia Minor. The decisive part he played at Constantinople between 379 and 381 led to the collapse of Arianism.

More suited to a life of thought and letters than to the rough-and-tumble of an active existence (the Greeks called him the Theologian or the Christian Demosthenes),

Gregory was of an anxious disposition, which is revealed to the full in his poems, as in his homilies and addresses.

To the personal approach to life and the reactions of the sensitive temperament he gave a quite new expression, which takes us far away from the Fathers of the third century and the liturgical and scriptural style of their prayers. Gregory anticipates the Confessions of St. Augustine and the lyricism of the romantics. It is the profoundly human undertones in the prayer of this Christian humanist that make it so strangely modern.

Paschal Doxology

244 GREAT you are, Pasch (I mean to speak to you, you see, as if you were a living person); holy you are, cleansing the world from all its stains.

Word spoken by God,¹ light, life, wisdom, power: all these names are yours, and I use them all to greet you with. Fruit, invention, image of the great Mind; as word spiritual, as human visible; firmly uttered by God to be the support of all things and to bind them together: accept this address, even though it is not the beginning of my career, but its end.² Take it as a thanksgiving, take it as a prayer that I may have nothing to suffer beyond those necessary trials, those holy trials which I have known all my life long. Check the power my body has over me—you know, Lord, what it is like, how burdensome it is; and do not be in a hurry to condemn me when it comes to my purification. May my prayers be answered; may I find a welcome in heaven. Here and now I will offer on your holy altar a sacrifice you will be glad to receive, O Father, Word and Holy Spirit.

Glory, honour and power are your due, in all their various forms, throughout the endless succession of ages. Amen.

Prayer on the Death of his Brother, Caesarius³

245 O MASTER and Creator of all that is, especially of this creature, man, whom you made as an image of yourself; you that are men's God and Father and Pilot;⁴ Lord of life and death: you watch over our souls and fill them with blessings; you made all things and you remake them to other shapes, through the artistry of your Word, at the proper time and in the way he knows in his deep wisdom and prudence to be best.

The last has gone to you first—be it so: we accept your decrees; the

¹ The paschal feast personified.

² It was Gregory's last sermon. He died soon after.

³ Taken from the sermon preached when the remains of Caesarius were moved from their original resting-place, in his mother's presence, about 369.

⁴ The image of the pilot is often applied to God in Christian Greek literature.

world is governed by them. May you bid us welcome in our turn, whenever you please, when you have left us long enough in the flesh under your guidance for the good of our souls.

When you come to welcome us, may you find us ready, schooled by the fear of you, untroubled, unhesitant on the last day. May you wrench us away from the things of earth in so far as our love of the world and the flesh is excessive, and make us turn with a will towards the life of eternal bliss, the life that is in Christ Jesus, our Lord. Glory to him throughout the unending succession of ages. Amen.

Hymn

246 O ALL-TRANSCENDENT God
 (what other name describes you?)
 what words can sing your praises?
 No word at all denotes you.
 What mind can probe your secret?
 No mind at all can grasp you.
 Alone beyond the power of speech,
 all men can speak of springs from you;
 alone beyond the power of thought,
 all men can think of stems from you.
 All things proclaim you—
 things that can speak, things that can not.
 All things revere you—
 things that have reason, things that have none.
 The whole world's longing
 and pain mingle about you.
 All things breathe you a prayer,
 a silent hymn of your own composing.
 All that exists you uphold,
 all things in concert move to your orders.
 You are the end of all that is,
 you are one, you are all;
 you are none of the things that are,
 you are not a part and not the whole.
 All names are at your disposal;
 how shall I name you, the only unnameable?
 What mind's affinities with heaven
 can pierce the veils above the clouds?
 Mercy, all-transcendent God
 (what other name describes you?).

Evening Hymn

247 NOW do we give you our praise,
Christ to us, to God Word,
Light from eternal Light,¹
Dispenser of the Spirit's graces.
Now do we bless you, threefold Light
with the one brightness.
You it was who dissolved the darkness
and put the light there:
Light there should be for creating,
for staying the fluid matter
and shaping the world
and making its present beauty.
You it is who give men the light
of reason and wisdom,
give them an image
of the splendour above, the brilliance below;
that with the light that is theirs
they may see the light that is not theirs,
and all may be light.

You brightened the heavens
with their various stars.
You bade night and day
succeed each other peaceably;
the law you gave them was the law
of brotherhood and friendship.
At night after their labours
you give rest to our bodies—
our bodies born to much toil.
By day you spur us on to work
and do what pleases you,
that shunning the dark
we may hasten on to that day
which no sad night shall overwhelm.

With lightest of fingers
may sleep caress my eyelids,
that so my tongue may not for long

¹ As in the hymn 'Phos Hilaron', no. 223 above, the image of light continually recurs in these evening prayers.

be idle in its praise of you,
your creature cease for long
to hymn you with the angels.
Holy be my thoughts, be my thoughts in your presence,
as I lie down to rest.
Far from my mind this night
be the deeds that have sullied the day,
far from my dreams
the night's disturbing illusions.
Though my lips may not speak to you, God,
my mind must pursue you,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
Honour, glory, power to you
now and in every age. Amen.

Before Reading Scripture

- 248 FATHER of Christ, all-seeing, hear these prayers.
Let me, your servant, hear the wonderful song;
and may he guide my feet along God's path
who knows the God from whom he draws his being—
the royal Christ who wards off ills from mortals;
who, filled with pain that men should suffer so,
changed, with his Father's blessing, his own state
from God immortal into mortal man
to free us all who chafed against hell's chains.

A Prayer to Christ in Sickness

- 249 CHRIST, give me strength: your servant is not what he was.
The tongue that praised you idle? How can you bear it?
Give your priest strength, do not cast him off.
O to be well again, to preach once more
salvation and to wash the people clean.
Do not forsake me, my Strength, I beseech you.
When the storm beat hard I may have betrayed you,
but let me return to you now.

Against the Devil

- 250 SAVE me, save me, Immortal,
from the Enemy's hand;

let no evil-doing defeat me
 or Pharaoh torment me;
 let me not be his captive,
 Christ, your Opponent's;
 let him not wound me and drag me
 to hard-hearted Babylon.

I would live for ever in your temple,
 singing your praises,
 safe from the showers of Sodom,
 from the flames on the head,
 all evil dispelled by the shadow
 of your powerful hand.

Morning Prayer

251 I RISE and pledge myself to God
 to do no deed at all of dark.
 This day shall be his sacrifice
 and I, unmoved, my passions' lord.
 I blush to be so old and foul
 and yet to stand before his table.
 You know what I would do, O Christ;
 O then, to do it make me able.

Prayer to Christ

252 I AM spent, O my Christ, Breath of my life.
 Perpetual stress and surge, in league together,
 make long, O long, this life, this business of living.
 Grappling with foes within and foes without,
 my soul hast lost its beauty, blurred your image.

Did ever oak such buffeting from winds
 or ship receive from waves as I do now?
 Labour to labour, task succeeds to task.
 Even my Father's house, received in trust
 reluctantly, I've found in dust and ruins.¹

Friendship has bowed and illness wasted me.
 Stones for my welcome, not a flower I've had.

¹ An allusion to the difficulties which the episcopate, to which he was not temperamentally suited, had in store for Gregory.

The folk the Spirit gave to me is gone:
 this child I've had to leave, this left me, that
 cares nought for me. Heavy the father's heart.

My fellow priests are more than enemies;
 the mystic table draws no reverence
 from them; they scorn these sufferings of mine
 that sometimes from the worst have won respect.
 One only thing they long for: my disgrace.

Other Prayers to Christ

I

- 253 ALAS, dear Christ, the Dragon is here again.
 Alas, he is here: terror has seized me, and fear.
 Alas that I ate of the fruit of the tree of knowledge.¹
 Alas that his envy led me to envy too.
 I did not become like God; I was cast out of paradise.
 Temper, sword, awhile, the heat of your flames
 and let me go again about the garden,
 entering with Christ, a thief from another tree.

II

- 254 I HAVE deceived myself, dear Christ, I confess it;
 I have fallen from the heights to the depths.
 O lift me up again, for well I know
 delusion came because I wanted it.
 If I presume again, I'll fall again,
 and fall to my undoing. Take me to you
 or I die. It cannot be that I
 alone shall find you hard and unresponsive.

III

- 255 LIFE is a burden; most of it gone,
 I would be gone with it too,
 for evil, alas, will not be bowed down.
 Breath of all mortals, lengthen my days
 or out of the reach of misfortune
 set me and stablish me; that would be kindness.
 If you will not, I must die.

¹ An allusion to Genesis 3:3, where the Lord forbids men to eat the fruit of the tree that is in the middle of the garden.

What would you more? What but the fire
kindly to men can await me?¹

IV

To His Own Soul

256 LABOUR awaits you, soul, great labour,
if you would know yourself,
the what, the whither and the whence,
the way of now behaving—
whether it should be as it is
or whether more is expected;
labour awaits you, soul, and a purer life.

If you would ponder on God and probe
into his mysteries,
if you would know what was there before
the world and the world itself—
the source from which it came to you,
the end that will take it from you:
labour awaits you, soul, and a purer life.

If you would know how God guides the helm
of the world and the course he plots,
why he set some things like rocks in the sea
while others he left in flux—
why men most of all are caught in the stream
and the swirl of perpetual change:
labour awaits you, soul, and a purer life.

If you would show me my former glory,
the shame that has come to succeed it,
what binds me to this mortal life
and what my end will be—
if you would hold this light to my mind
and drive dark error from it:
labour awaits you, soul; may it not undo you.

¹ The Benedictine editors thought that the reference here was to purgatory, but the fire seems rather to stand for God's love. What Gregory fears most of all is that he will not find his way to God.

Lament

257 ALAS, I neither care to live nor die,
 for life means sin and after death comes judgement.
 Trembling I stand between them; flames flow round me.
 Courage from Christ I take: no power of mine
 is equal to the struggle with existence.
 If to remain a while upon this earth
 will cleanse me from my sins, it will be well;
 but if my woes increase, then, while there's time,
 O let me die, lest worse should overtake me.

GREGORY OF NYSSA

(†394)

Gregory was St. Basil's younger brother. He was ordained lector at a quite early age, but he allowed himself to be deflected from the clerical life, became a rhetorician and married.

Under the influence of his friend, Gregory of Nazianzus, he withdrew into solitude to lead the ascetic life. He became a priest and was nominated by Basil to the see of Nyssa, in Asia Minor.

To the task of giving a rational account of his faith, Gregory brought keen powers of speculation, a mind richly stored with secular culture and a philosophy inspired by Platonism. His view of the creation of man is particularly penetrating—the idea that mankind consists of a single whole, which will not achieve its fulness until the end of time. His prayer of thanksgiving alludes to this theory.

In his mystical writings, he paves the way for St. John of the Cross. He also wrote five homilies on prayer, which form an admirable commentary on the Our Father.

Prayer of St. Macrina¹ on her Deathbed

They turned her bed to the east . . . and speaking in a low voice, she said:

258 LORD, you have taken the fear of death away from us. The end of our life here you have made the beginning of the true life. For a little while you will let our bodies rest in sleep, and then with the last trumpet you will wake them from their sleep.

You give to the earth to keep for you this earth of ours, which you shaped with your own hands; and you will take it back again, and from a mortal, formless lump transform it into a thing of immortal beauty.

To free us from sin and from the curse laid upon us, you took both sin and the curse upon yourself.

¹ The sister of Basil and Gregory of Nyssa.

You crushed the head of the dragon that had seized men by the throat and thrust them into the gulf prepared for the disobedient.

When you shattered the gates of hell and trampled the Devil, death's lord, beneath your feet, you cleared the way for our resurrection.

To us who fear you you gave a sign, the sign of your holy cross, to destroy the Enemy and infuse new vigour into our lives.

O eternal God, you have been my refuge ever since I left my mother's womb; I love you with all my inmost strength; I have devoted myself body and soul to you from my childhood onwards.

Set now an angel of light beside me and bid him take my hand and lead me to the resting-place where there is water for refreshment, beside the dwellings of the holy fathers.

The flaming sword you snapped in two; the man who hung upon the cross with you and implored your great mercy you restored to paradise. Remember me too, now that you are back in your kingdom, since I also have hung upon the cross with you and the nails have pierced my flesh; for I have always feared you and feared your judgement. May the dread gulf not divide me from your elect or the Slanderer stand in my way; may your eyes not rest on my sins.

If out of the weakness of human nature I have fallen and sinned in word or deed or thought, forgive it me; for you have power to forgive sins on earth. When I am divested of my body, may I stand before you with my soul unspotted: receive it, blameless and faultless, with your own hands.

Thanksgiving

259 KINDNESS flows from you, Lord, pure and continual.

You had cast us off, as was only just, but mercifully you forgave us; you hated us and you were reconciled to us, you cursed us and you blessed us;

you banished us from paradise, and you called us back again;

you took from us the fig-leaves¹ that had made us so unseemly a garment, and you put on us a cloak of great value;

you opened the prison-gates and gave the condemned a pardon;

you sprinkled us with clean water and washed away the dirt.

Never again, after all this, will Adam blush when you call him, never will he try to hide because his conscience reproaches him, never will he seek concealment under the trees in the garden. The flaming sword will

¹ An allusion to the fig-leaves in which Adam and Eve clothed themselves after their sin. Cf. Gen. 3:7-8.

nevermore whirl about the walls of paradise and cut off the entrance from those who approach it.

For us that were heirs to his sin, all has been changed to rejoicing; for man now has access to paradise and even to heaven itself. The whole creation, heaven and earth, is at one again in friendship, its former differences forgotten: men join their voices with the angels' and echo the angels' praise of God.

Let us, then, sing that joyful hymn which a voice inspired by the Spirit once sang in prophecy:

My soul will rejoice in the Lord,
for he has given me salvation for my garment
and joy to wrap me round like a cloak;
he has set on my head a garland like a bridegroom's
and has dressed me like a bride in her finery.

There is no doubt who it is that dresses the bride in her finery: it is, of course, Christ—he that is and was and will be. Blessed is he, now and throughout the ages. Amen.

EPIPHANIUS OF SALAMIS

(†403)

Epiphanius was born in Judaea, lived as a monk in Egypt and finally became bishop of the island of Salamis. He was a hammer of heretics. His zeal was undeniable but, unfortunately, it was also excessive and relatively unenlightened. This, together with his tendency to exclude all but the most traditional ideas and his hostility both to the culture of the Greek world and to historical criticism, made him a toy in the hands of Theophilus of Alexandria and darkens his memory. The following hymn, composed in the authentic style of the Bible, is taken from his principal work, a treatise against heresies.

Hymn to the Church

260 COME away from Lebanon, bride, for you are fair in every part and there is no fault to be found in you.

Paradise of the great Architect, city of the holy King, bride of the spotless Christ, pure in virginity, faithfully promised in marriage to the one Husband, radiant and shining like the dawn: Fair you are as the moon, majestic as the sun, inspiring awe as an army does drawn up for battle.

Queens call you blessed, concubines sing your praises, maidservants proclaim their respect for you.¹

¹ Cf. Song of Songs 6:7.

Dazzling the sight of you as you come up from the desert, . . . scented vapours enclosing you.

Like a column of smoke you come up from the desert, breathing out myrrh and incense, sweeter than all the scents the perfumer has given his powders. Well did he know it who foretold of you: 'Your very name soothes the heart like flow of myrrh; what wonder the maids should love you?'

Your place is at the King's right hand, your robe is of gold, fringed and embroidered.

There is no darkness in you. Once you were black, but now you have beauty and whiteness of skin.

With you there is safety from heresy's hateful designs and shelter from the storms it raises; with you, holy mother Church, we take heart again, with you and with your holy teaching, which alone tells us what we may truly believe about God.

ASTERIUS OF AMASIA

(†410)

Asterius was Bishop of Amasia, a city in Pontus. He left sixteen homilies to posterity, all of them fine compositions in the grand style. The following hymn for Easter, which is taken from one of the homilies, illustrates the rhetorical setting-forth of teaching based on Scripture and inspired by liturgical themes.

Easter Hymn

I

261 NOW is the time for the heiress, the Church, to be glad; for Christ, her Husband, is at the end of his sufferings and has risen from the dead. She mourned for him when he suffered; it is for her to rejoice over him now that he has risen.

The heiress has reason to be glad, for the nation with whom the former covenant was made has been disinherited; it burns with shame to have killed the heir and lost the inheritance. The Bridegroom has risen and the Jewish people, the adversaries of the heiress, burn with shame. Why should they be ashamed? Because they falsely denied Christ's rising; because they said: 'The Lord's disciples have taken him away.' If they had taken him away from the tomb and he was still dead, how did the apostles cure the paralytic by the virtue of his name? The dead do not cure paralytics. The dead do not give men the use of their feet. The dead do not teach men to walk. One cannot teach others to do what one is unable to do oneself.

The Bridegroom has risen; and as advocates come before the judge, so the holy prophets and apostles come to congratulate the Church on the winning of her inheritance.

Rejoice, bride of Christ: the Bridegroom in his rising has raised you too, low though you lay, trampled by passing feet. No longer shall your children worship at altars raised to demons; Christ's temples now stand open for the newly baptised. No longer shall the shrines of idols have undisputed homage; Christ's altars shall have men's allegiance.

II

262 O NIGHT more light than day,
more bright than the sun,
O night more white than snow,
more brilliant than many torches,
O night of more delight than is paradise.

Night devoid of all dark,
O night dispelling sleep
and teaching us the vigilance of angels,
O night the demons tremble at,
night of all nights in all the year desired.

Night of the Church's bridal,
night of new birth in baptism,
night when the Devil slept and was stripped,
night when the Heir took the heiress
to enjoy their inheritance.

SYNESIUS OF CYRENE

(†414)

Synesius was a strange character. A Libyan aristocrat with a mind sharpened by contact with the best thought of Greece in the schools of Alexandria, he became ambassador to Constantinople, where he used his influence in favour of his fellow-countrymen. By the pressure of public opinion he was chosen Bishop of Ptolemais, in Libya, while he was still a pagan.

He remained more faithful to his pagan past than to his new faith. But as a poet he had exacting standards, and he composed hymns in the Doric dialect which present a curious mixture of Attic ideas and Christian ones.

Hymn to Christ

263 SING we her Son whom wedlock
bound to no human bed.
The Father's hidden counsels
decreed the birth of Christ,
the virgin lent her labour
and gave him human shape:
he came and brought us mortals
light, the fount of light.

Before the seed of time took root,
you were born mysteriously.
O Well of light, O Splendour
shining with the Father,
the murk of matter breaks before you,
you shine in souls that are pure.

Creator of the universe—
the wheels of noble stars,
the centre of the rooted earth—
you the Saviour of men:
for you the great sun goes riding,
unscorched by his fiery horses,
the heifer-headed moon for you
whitens the gloom of night,
the crops increase and grow for you,
for you the cattle graze.
From the secret fountain of you,
vitalising brightness
flows to fecundate the world;
from your bosom light is born,
soul and understanding.
Have compassion on your daughter
in her fleshly prison,
the measure of her mortal lot.
Keep from the touch of disease
the vigour of our limbs unscathed.
Grant us words to persuade
and deeds to win men's reverence,

that they make speak of us
as once of Sparta and Cyrene.¹

May sorrow never walk the ways
of my soul, but leave my life
in peace, my vision undisturbed,
set on your splendour.

May matter not impede me. Speed me
along unswerving paths,
far from this bitter earth, and plunge me
into the Source of my being.
So may he spotless be who makes
music for your praising.

Now as I sing my hymns to you,
to your great Father's glory
and to the Spirit throned together
with Father and with Son,
now as I sing the Father's power
and bring my hymns to you,
my soul conceives a son of its own
and breathes its own spirit.

Hail Father, Source of the Son,
Son, the Father's Image,
Father, the Ground where the Son stands,
Son, the Father's Scal,
Father, the Power of the Son,
Son, the Father's Beauty,
spotless Spirit, bond between
the Father and the Son.
Send, O Christ, the Spirit, send
the Father to my soul;
steep my dry heart in this dew,
the best of all your gifts.

CYRIL OF ALEXANDRIA

(†444)

Cyril was the most distinguished doctor of the school of Alexandria, which in the fifth century rivalled the school of Antioch. With a pugnacious disposition and a love of

¹ The whole of this passage is thoroughly Platonic in tone.

strong measures he combined a knowledge of theology which eventually made him the arbiter of doctrine in the East. As Patriarch of Alexandria he boldly attacked the Nestorian heresy, thereby serving the interests of the faith and at the same time indirectly furthering the claims of Alexandria.

Throughout the history of the Church, he will always be known for his defence of the doctrine that Mary is the mother of God. The following hymn in her praise is taken from the most famous of all the homilies devoted to her in the early Christian period. It shows how far theology had developed by this time, and it combines the soundest of teaching with truly devotional feeling.

Hymn to the Mother of God

264 HAIL, O Trinity, holy and mystical, in answer to whose call we have all assembled in this church of Mary, the mother of God.

Hail Mary, mother of God,
the whole world's treasure, commanding its reverence,
lamp that will never cease to burn,
crowning glory of the virgin state,
mainstay of orthodox faith,
temple that none can demolish,
place that encompasses him whom no place encompasses,
both mother and virgin.

Thanks to you, he that comes in the name of the Lord is called blessed in the holy gospels. Hail to you: to him that is not bounded by any place you have given a place in your holy, virginal womb.

Thanks to you, the Trinity is glorified and the cross called precious and given honour throughout the world.

Thanks to you the heavens rejoice, the angels and archangels keep festival, the evil spirits are put to flight. Thanks to you the Devil, who had tempted man, fell from heaven and fallen man was taken back again.

Thanks to you the whole creation, ensnared by idolatry, came to the knowledge of the truth. Thanks to you, baptism was given to believers, and oil to make them glad.

Thanks to you, churches have been built throughout the world and the pagan peoples are on their way to conversion.

And again,

thanks to you, God's only Son shed his light on them that were living in darkness, in the shadow of death.

Thanks to you, the prophets prophesied and the apostles preached salvation to the Gentiles.

Thanks to you, the dead return to life and kings govern their people, for the sake of the Holy Trinity.

Much praised is Mary, but what human tongue can adequately declare her worth? She is a mother and she is still a virgin. The wonder of it dazes me. And yet, who ever heard of an architect that built a temple and was forbidden to enter it? Who can claim to be slighted if God calls his servant to be his mother?

The whole world therefore rejoices.

2

The Syriac and Coptic Fathers

In the fourth and fifth centuries, Christian writing in Syria reached a degree of brilliance comparable to that of the Greek and Latin fathers. Like Alexandria and Antioch, Edessa, in Mesopotamia, the intellectual capital of Syriac theology, had a celebrated school. Its leading light was the deacon, Ephraem. The Nestorian Narses was in charge of it in 437 but was dismissed and then founded the school of Nisibis.

The other Levantine peoples who had accepted Christianity—the Copts, Ethiopians, Georgians and Arabs—were also developing a literature of their own at this period. It began with translation. They translated from the Greek, especially commentaries on Scripture, but their first care was to give their fellow-countrymen a version of the Scriptures and the liturgy. It was only when this aim had been achieved that original work made its appearance.

It is difficult to criticise the teaching of the Syriac fathers and, consequently, difficult to pass judgement on their prayer. Critical editions are as essential in this field as they are hard to produce, the market having been flooded in the succeeding centuries with works written by monks and attributed to the famous doctors; but no critical edition has as yet appeared. The attributions of the passages quoted below are therefore only provisional.

The striking points about Syriac prayers and hymns are their length, their gaudiloquent style, the absence of a rigorous plan beneath the construction, and the fact that the link between one member and the next is verbal rather than logical. Whereas the Latin temperament tends towards reserve in prayer, the Syrian lets itself go. Hence the note of prolixity both in the liturgy and in literature, which is so different from the Roman characteristic of restraint.

Repentance and sin are favourite themes. Monasticism seems to have produced a preoccupation with individual salvation. In comparison with the earlier centuries, the horizons are more limited.

EPHRAEM

(†373)

Ephraem was the greatest of the Syrian doctors. He was born at Nisibis, north-east of Mosul, in Mesopotamia, and was taught by the bishop, James, whom he afterwards served as deacon until the town was taken by the Persians. He then went to Edessa,

which was in Roman territory, and there he founded a school known as the Persian School.

His enormous output of literature and theology won him the name of 'lyre of the Holy Spirit'. A critical edition of his works has, unfortunately, yet to be made. It is all the more necessary in that other people continued his writings, and their work has been taken for his.

His prestige was such that, according to Jerome (*De Viris*, 115), his works were read aloud in some churches after the Scriptures. He was soon translated into Greek, a language which was not rich in Christian poetry. He was widely read in the Hellenistic world and seems to have exerted a lasting influence on the Byzantine liturgy as well as on the Syriac (see A. Puech, *Hist. de la littérature grecque chrétienne*, iii, 599).

Eucharistic Hymn

265 THE flames of his love burst forth
and Jesus rose
from the place where he was reclining
and began to fulfil the mysteries
and celebrate the true Passover. . . .

On the night of that paschal feast
he laid this law on his Church:
it was to call to mind the Lamb,
the Son of God,
who before he was killed for us,
gave us his body and blood. . . .

O light-filled night
in which the mysteries were revealed,
the seal set to the covenant
made long before,
the Church of the Gentiles
enriched.
Blessed the night, blessed the hour
when the supper was hallowed.

Hymn for the Ascension

266 THE new and mystic Bread
today
has gone up to heaven.
What was hidden
was revealed in this body of yours

which has gone up
like an oblation.
Blessed, Lord, be your bread.

The Lamb of the house of David
came to us,
the Priest of Abraham's stock.
He came to be our Priest,
and his body is the victim
and his blood the libation.
Blessed be his sacrifice.

From heaven he came as light comes,
from Mary as a shoot from the root;
from the cross he was picked like a fruit;
he went up to heaven as our first-fruit.
Blessed be his will. . . .

You are heaven's offering and earth's:
the one slew you,
the other adored you.
You came down on earth
and there you were the Victim,
you went up to heaven
as the great Oblation.
Up you went to heaven, Lord,
bearing the offering.

Prayer in Old Age

267 O LORD Jesus Christ, King of kings: you have power over life and death, you know even what is uncertain and obscure, our thoughts and feelings are no secret from you. Cleanse me from my hidden faults, for I have done evil and you have seen it.

Day by day my life draws nearer to its end and my sins increase in number. O Lord, God of spirits and of all corporeal creatures, you know how frail I am, in soul and in body. Give me strength, Lord, in my weakness and uphold me in my sufferings.

Knowing that I have come to be regarded by many people as an oddity, you strengthen and support me. Give me a prudent judgement, good Lord, and let me always remember your blessings. Do not think of my many sins; put my faults out of your mind.

Lord, do not disdain my prayer, a sinner's though it is and worthless; but leave with me until the end that grace of yours that has been my protection until now. Your grace it was that taught me wisdom. Blessed are they that keep to its paths; a glorious crown awaits them.

I am unworthy and sinful, Lord, but still I bless and praise you, for you have poured your mercies lavishly over me; you have been my Helper and Protector; your great name deserves eternal glory.

Glory to you, O Lord, our God.

Prayer in Preparation for Death

268 O GOD born of God, true God of the true God born, you are goodness itself, we confess it. In your kindness come to our aid. May we never know the day when we shall have to share with Satan the pains of hell. Be merciful and hide us under the shadow of your wings.

We acknowledge that you are the Light. We are as servants in your hands; do not allow the Evil One to snatch us from you; prevent us from rebelling against your sovereignty.

We know that you are just: show us your justice, Lord. We know that you are our Saviour: deliver us, save us from evil. We acknowledge your holiness: make us holy through your body and blood. Having eaten your flesh and drunk your precious blood, may the elect sing your praises.

Grant us forgiveness, kind God, merciful as you are to sinners.

Prayer to the Suffering Christ

269 I WORSHIP you, Lord; I bless you, God the good; I beseech you, Most Holy; I fall down before you, Lover of men.

I give you glory, O Christ, because you, the Only Begotten, the Lord of all things, who alone are without sin, gave yourself to die for me, a sinner, unworthy of such a blessing: you died the death of the cross to free my sinful soul from the bonds of sin.

What shall I give you, Lord, in return for all this kindness?

Glory to you for your love.

Glory to you for your mercy.

Glory to you for your patience.

Glory to you for forgiving us all our sins.

Glory to you for coming to save our souls.

Glory to you for your incarnation in the virgin's womb.

Glory to you for your bonds.
 Glory to you for receiving the cut of the lash.
 Glory to you for accepting mockery.
 Glory to you for your crucifixion.
 Glory to you for your burial.
 Glory to you for your resurrection.
 Glory to you that were preached to men.
 Glory to you in whom they believed.
 Glory to you that were taken up into heaven.

Glory to you who sit in great glory at the Father's right hand and will come again with the glory of the Father and the holy angels to judge the souls of those who have despised your holy sufferings. When that time of awe and terror comes, the powers in the heavens will quake with dread; angels, archangels, cherubim and seraphim will come together in fear and trembling before your glory; the foundations of the earth will shake, and everything that breathes will shudder before the incomparable greatness of your glory.

When that time comes, fold your hand about me and hide me, that my soul may escape the terrible fire, the gnashing of teeth, the darkness without and the endless weeping. So may I bless you and say:

Glory to you whose will it is that the sinner should be saved through your great mercy and compassion.

MACARIUS OF EGYPT

(†390)

A large number of writings—homilies on the ascetic life for the most part, but letters as well, and apophthegms—are in circulation under the name of Macarius (which means 'Blessed'). On the strength of the fifty homilies, 'Macarius' would be classed among the principal mystics of the early Christian period; but the works attributed to him seem in fact to have been produced by a number of writers, all monks, who simply took cover behind the name of this well-known father.

The historical Macarius of Egypt, also called Macarius the Elder and Macarius the Great, lived for sixty years in the Scetic Desert. He acquired an exceptional reputation among the monks of northern Egypt for his wisdom and eloquence. The evening prayer attributed to him forms part of the office of none in the Jacobite Church.

Evening Prayer

270 IT was at the end of time that you came, O God, to save us; the light was failing when you drove Adam from paradise and when you opened the

gates to let him in again. Remember your death on the cross and be merciful, now that the end of my life is approaching, now that the evening awaits me. Time is too short for me to wash all my sins away. There are so many of them. I cannot ask for as many years in which to make amends.

Spare me, Lord, when I appear before your terrible tribunal; have pity on me, God, for there will be limits then to your mercy. Cast me a look as you give your verdicts in all their severity, and let me see the peace and gentleness in your face.

Heal me while I am still on earth and I shall have health indeed. In your mercy raise me up and bring me to repentance, so that when I meet you in heaven I shall have no cause for shame. Do not leave me, Lord, in my enemies' power; do not let me fall a prey to those who set snares for my soul; do not let me lose your grace or the gift of the Spirit.

Lord, I will wash the stains from my garment, for I do not want to be cast into the darkness without, like the man who was judged unfit to be at the feast. Enable me to keep my lamp full of oil, as your servants must if they are to win your approval, and then I shall not be refused admittance like the foolish virgins. Spare me, Lord, those terrifying words that you keep for those on your left; do not say to me: 'I do not know you.'

Through the blood which you shed on the cross for me, give me life, for you are merciful. May I always bear witness to your word and live for your glory; may delight be mine in your kingdom for ever. Amen.

Prayer to One's Guardian Angel

271 HOLY angel, to whose care this poor soul and wretched body of mine have been given, do not cast me off because I am a sinner, do not hold aloof from me because I am not clean. Do not yield your place to the Spirit of Evil;¹ guide me by your influence on my mortal body.

Take my limp hand and bring me to the path that leads to salvation.

Yes, holy angel, God has given you charge of my miserable little soul and body. Forgive every deed of mine that has ever offended you at any time in my life; forgive the sins I have committed today. Protect me during the coming night and keep me safe from the machinations and contrivances of the Enemy, that I may not sin and arouse God's anger.

¹ The fathers thought of man as surrounded by spirits, good and bad, contending for the possession of his soul. The theology of the angels had been worked out by Origen before the patristic period.

Intercede for me with the Lord; ask him to make me fear him more and more, and to enable me to give him the service his goodness deserves. Amen.

CYRILLONA

(Fourth Century)

Practically nothing is known of the life of Cyrillona. He probably came from Mesopotamia; he was a deacon and perhaps a bishop; he lived through an invasion by the Huns, to which his poems allude.

The six hymns which are all that remains of his literary output show him to have been a genuine poet, with some originality and depth of outlook. Bickell, the editor of his poems, places him immediately after St. Ephraem.

The Holiness of the Church

272 DO not think, Lord, of those who offend you:
consider those who appease your wrath.
You have no lack of servants on this earth
who work for the truth.
You can find men of perfect life
in monasteries everywhere.
Men are found to live in solitude
even in caves among the rocks,
and even in the desert there are penitents.
Monks take refuge on the heights
and distant islands receive God's heroes.

Listen, and you will hear the sound
of psalms rising from the houses
and hymns from the fields.
You find men to serve you on the seas:
sailors offer you their prayers.
Cities acknowledge your word,
judges fear the sentence you may pronounce.
Sinners themselves thirst after your holiness
and sinful women are covered with confusion.

Pagans have forsaken their idols
and pagan priests their beliefs.
Persia has received your message,
your gospel has spread to Assyria.

Peter teaches at Rome
and Thomas in the Indies.
Greeks expound your mysteries,
Romans your holy books.

Your cross is the guide of kings,
your charity dwells in the hearts of queens.
Your hand upholds the universe,
your love gives rest to the world.
Your life-giving body lies at the heart of your Church
and your holy blood is the Bride's protection.
We praise your greatness with our hymns,
the whole universe together makes you a prayer.

Lord, restrain your threatened anger:
our necks are too frail for your sword.
Bring all our wars to an end,
give the world peace and salvation.
Save us from earthquakes,
keep evil tidings away.
Give us in pity the fruits of the earth,
and men, much tired, will know delight again.
Grant us a pleasant summer
and a mild winter.
Have done with anger;
let your mercy have its way.

RABBULA OF EDESSA

(†436)

Like Cyril of Alexandria, Rabbula, Bishop of Edessa, was a great opponent of Nestorianism. He is said to be the author of the Syriac translation of the New Testament, the 'Peshitta'. The hymns attributed to him are of doubtful authenticity. A few fragments follow.

Hymn to the Martyrs

273 YOU are like grapes on God's vine, blessed martyrs, and the Church is drunk with the wine you make. You are God's lamps, and how brightly you shine. You welcomed your sufferings as though they were pleasures: yours is the triumph, not theirs who put you to death.

Glory to the Power that helped you in the struggle.

May the God who came to save us have pity on us. When the saints were

preparing for their feast of suffering, they drank the wine the Jews had made in the press of Golgotha, and so they came to know the mysteries of God's house.

Therefore we sing: Praise be to Christ, who made the martyrs drunk with the blood that came from his side.

Wonderful the feast the Father in heaven has prepared for his only Son, the feast to which he has invited the prophets, the apostles and the martyrs. What the Father has ready for his friends no eye has ever seen, what the Son has ready for his guests no ear has ever heard and no mind has ever known its secret.

Therefore we sing: Guests at the house of light, intercede for us all; pray that we may keep ourselves clear of the wrath that is to come.

We have been invited to celebrate your triumph and now we come, in the hope of obtaining help and healing through your prayers.

Hail prophets, hail apostles: you that have built up our faith.

Hail, you unshakable towers that protect our souls.

Hail to you that have been initiated into God's mysteries and have scaled the heights.

Hail, you wonderful pillars that hold up the earth and protect it from the sins that were bringing it to the point of collapse.

See, the Church and we her children celebrate your feast, in the hope that our souls will be saved from the wrath that is to come.

Prophets, apostles, holy martyrs, glorious friends of the Son, ask him who gave you your garlands to turn aside from us the blows and punishments that are imminent. Our country, beset on every side by wars and crises, is listless and dejected. May your prayers deliver it from its misfortunes, for your feast sets heaven and earth ablaze with light. And while we appeal to you, we also say to the Lord:

Corrector of insensate hearts, Christ the hope of them that struggle, be merciful when you correct us, win us over by your grace, have pity on us all.

A Penitent's Prayer

- 274 YOU are rich in grace and mercy, you are willing to cleanse all sinners from their guilt. Cleanse me with hyssop, have pity on me. In your mercy spare me, as you spared the publican and the sinful woman. You take the sinfulness from sinners, O Christ, and when we repent you make us welcome beside you. Redeemer of the human race, in your mercy save me.

If salvation is hard for even the just to obtain, what will become of me, sinner that I am? I have not borne the day's burden or the sun's heat; I am one of those workmen who came at the eleventh hour. Save me, have pity on me.

My sins have bowed me to the ground and cast me down from the heights where I sat enthroned. I could not have been more determined on my own ruin if I had rushed over a precipice. Who but you can restore to me the beauty I had at first, O wisest of Creators—who but you, who made me in the first place like yourself, made me an image of yourself? It was my own free choice that made me an accomplice of the Devil and a slave of sin. Deliver me, Lord, in your mercy; have pity on me.

My thoughts confuse me and cloud my mind; I am in despair because my guilt is vaster than the ocean and my sins outnumber the waves in the sea. Yet I have heard your gracious words: 'Call and I shall hear you; knock and I will open the door for you.' I call, then, to you like the sinful woman in the gospel, I entreat you like the publican and the prodigal son. I have sinned against heaven and before you.

Deliver my soul from its sin, O Saviour, as you delivered theirs, for my misdeeds have kindled your wrath. In your mercy have pity on me.

When I remember how I have fallen, I tremble at the thought of your justice, for you are well aware of my sores and stains. I dare not look upwards, because my sins reach as high as the heavens; the mere sight of the earth is an accusation to me, for my offences exceed the number of its inhabitants.

Sorry my plight will be when the just and the saints come before God, their good deeds shining like the sun. What will become of me, Lord, and my lustreless works?

Sorry my plight will be when the priests come forward and give you back the talents they received from you. I buried mine, Lord, in the ground. What shall I find to say? What answer shall I be able to make?

I am determined that the fire shall not consume me, since you have given me your body and blood to feed me. I refuse to be carried off to hell, for you have given me baptism as a garment to clothe me.

Grant me the dew of your grace, and in your mercy, Lord, forgive me my sins; but above all, may glory be yours.

BALAI

(†460)

Balai was probably Chorepiscopus of Aleppo. Little remains of his poetical works. Several of his hymns have found a place in the Syriac liturgy. The irrepressible lyricism of his poetry (as, for that matter, of all Syriac literature) is somewhat disconcerting to western tastes, which are so very different.

For the Dedication of a Church

I

275 IT needs no more than three to meet in your name for a church to come into being. There are thousands assembled here: give them your protection. Their hearts had built this sanctuary to the glory of your name before ever hand laid one stone on another. May the temples we build within ourselves be as beautiful as the temple built of stone. May your kindness impel you to live in both kinds of temple, for our hearts, no less than these stones, bear the mark of your name.

God, who is all-powerful, could have made himself a house as easily as he brought the world into existence, with a wave of his hand. But he preferred to build man instead, and man in turn was to build for him. Blessed be the mercy that showed us such love.

II

He is infinite and we are finite; he built us the world and we build him a house. What a wonderful thing it is that men can build a house for the God of all power, who is present everywhere, whom nothing escapes.

He lives among us, such is his affection for us; he binds us to himself with his love. He has come to stay with us and he urges us to take the road to heaven, to go and live with him.

If he left his dwelling and chose to live in the Church, it was to persuade us to abandon our homes and choose paradise instead. God came to live among men that men might come into contact with God.

III

Yours is the kingdom of heaven, the house of God is ours; and building the house, the workmen merit the kingdom. There the priest offers bread in your name and you give your flock your body to eat.

Where are you, Lord? In heaven.

Where shall we expect to find you? Here in the sanctuary.

Your heavens are too high for us, but the church is within our reach and we can find you there.

Your throne in heaven rests on a bank of flame: who would dare to approach it? But the God of all power lives also in bread: whoever will may approach and taste.

Prayer to the Mother of God

276 BLESSED you are, Mary: in you the prophccies are fulfilled and the dark sayings of the prophets explained.

Moses foretold you by the burning bush and the cloud,

Jacob by the ladder leading to heaven,

David by the ark of the covenant,

Ezekiel by the door that was closed and sealed.

And now in your birth their mysterious words are made plain.

Glory to the Father who sent his only Son to manifest himself through Mary, to free us from error and make her memory glorious in heaven and on earth.

ISAAC OF ANTIOCH

(c. 460)

Almost all that is known of Isaac is that he came from Edessa, lived as a monk at Antioch and wrote against the Monophysites and the Nestorians. He composed a funeral-hymn after the destruction of Antioch by earthquake. The 'Nocturn' given below is a paraphrase of Psalm 91 (Hebrew 92).

Nocturne

277 SWEET it is to praise the Lord,
and the greatest blessing given us
is the power to sing, Most High,
in honour of your name.

No song so fine as this.
As soon as day breaks
we will proclaim your kindness,
because you have enabled us to watch
throughout this night.

We will spend all our nights in praising you,
every morning we will seek audience of you.
By day we will tell of your generosity,
by night of your faithfulness.

Fools, who do not trust you,
fret night after night, in vain.

On the ten strings of the harp
I will praise you, with all my senses,
and my ten fingers
shall glorify your majesty.

You fill me, Lord, with joy
when I think of the things you do,
and I sing for delight
when I see what you have made.
You created the world
simply by saying the word;
man alone you fashioned
with your own hands.

I glory in it all, and with my speech and reason
make music like a harp,
offering praise and thanks to you
on the world's behalf
that in your goodness you created.

Great are the things you have made,
but he that has learned to know their greatness
is greater than they.
I have learned to know their greatness:
I am greater than all you have created.

Infinite the depths of your thoughts.
I have tried to fathom them, but you are unfathomable.
Your mind dwells in the deep, beyond our reach,
and your thoughts are a mystery no man has explored.

The fool has no knowledge of you.
He sings under another's window¹
and he never thinks for a moment
that using the watches of the night as he might,
he could obtain eternal life.

The fool does not realise
how much more beautiful our songs are than his.

¹ An allusion to the nocturnal rejoicings which disturbed the prayers of the monks at Antioch.

He lets the better part slip from his grasp,
and what he sings of is vanity.

Great you are, Lord, great and eternal;
the reward that is yours to give will last for ever.
The wicked wither like grass in the fields;
those who acclaim them have received their reward.

The Lord's enemies will perish,
evil-doers will be scattered to the winds.

Those who give vent to their laughter
will have laughed to no purpose.
In vain they flatter nonentities:
they should have turned their wit on themselves.

No hymns will the sinner tolerate:
he will sing of nothing but sin.
You give me strength like a buffalo's
and anoint me with fresh oil.
These eyes of mine have seen you intervene
to save us,
these ears have heard your promises.
The just man will flourish like a palm-tree
and grow like the cedars on Lebanon
that never lose their leaves
or find their splendour dimmed.
His roots are planted in Yahweh's house,
in the courts of our God's palace,
where the Spirit, like wine,
fills him with delight.
He grows by the Spirit's influence,
grows as the cedars on Lebanon.
He will still bear fruit
however long he may live,
for these holy chants give him youth.
He is full of grace, as a tree is full of sap,
because he has received understanding
of the mysteries of the Spirit.
He proclaims that the Lord is just
and has a reward to give
to those who watch through the night for his sake.

All-powerful though he is and entitled to refuse us payment,
there is no injustice in him:
he will give us our reward.

SCHENUTE

(†466)

At Atripe, in Egypt, Schenute, like Pacomius, instituted a special form of monastic life. The monks of his famous 'White Monastery' (Deir-el-Abiad) were coenobites, but he had modified the current coenobitical rules to suit their needs. He is the greatest of the Coptic writers. His works include letters, sermons and apocalypses. It is hard to tell the genuine from the spurious in the body of writings attributed to him. The prayer given below is used in the midday and evening offices.

Prayer to God the Father

278 O GOD, watch over me always, in my work, in my words, in the thoughts of my heart.

O God, have pity on me, in this world and in the world to come.

O God, have pity on me, for I have sinned against you like the mortal that I am; but, kind and gentle Master, forgive me.

O God, may I not be afraid or disturbed when the time comes for my soul to leave my body.

O God, do not be angry then and rebuke me, do not give vent to wrath and punish me.

O God, do not show me the anger that my sins and misdeeds deserve.

O God, do not hide your face from me when I come before you, do not turn away from me when you pronounce your sentence on our lives—the lives we have lived openly and the lives that have been ours in secret.

O God, your Word was made flesh for me; for me he was crucified, died, was buried and on the third day rose again. Bind me to you, and let no evil spirit lord it over me and snatch me out of your hands.

O God, do not let me give way to disloyalty. May the Enemy find nothing in me that he can call his own.

O God, sharpen my will. May it be like a sword and cut all sinful thoughts out of my mind.

O God, as you calmed the sea with a word, so drive out the evil passions from my sinful nature. May sin die down and disappear from all my members.

O God, grant that my heart may always be pure and my faith orthodox for ever, yes for ever. Amen.

JAMES OF SARUGH

(†521)

James was Bishop of Batnan, near Edessa. He wrote homilies and letters. His poetical works are not extensive. Some of his hymns appear in the liturgy. Several anaphoras and liturgies have been attributed to him.

Hymn to Mary the Virgin

279 BLESSED is she: she gave a lodging to the Spirit who had made her pure and spotless; she became a temple to house high heaven's Son.

Blessed is she: she has kept her wonderful garland, the virgin's garland unfaded; it will never lose its marvellous freshness.

Blessed is she: Adam's breed through her was restored to favour; through her the children who had left their Father's house found their way back.

Blessed is she: she never knew a man's embrace, and she can look unashamed on her Son, like any other mother.

Blessed is she: her body was never defiled; the Fruit of her virginity, out of his affection for her, covered it with glory.

Blessed is she: her narrow womb enclosed the infinite Greatness which even the heavens are too small to contain.

Blessed is she: she gave life to the Ancestor of the whole human race, the Father of Adam himself; she gave life back to all fallen creatures.

Blessed is she: she fed at her breast him who stirs up the waves in the sea.

Blessed is she: mysteriously strong, she held up the Giant who holds up the world; tenderly she kissed and caressed him.

Blessed is she: she provided us prisoners with One to set us free: he imprisoned the prison-governor and brought back peace to the earth.

Blessed is she: she touched with her lips him before whose fiery heat the burning seraphim recoil.

Blessed is she: she fed with her milk him who gave life to the universe.

Blessed is she: for all the saints owe their happiness to her Son. Blessed is the Holy One of God, the Fruit of your purity.

3

The Latin Fathers

Though Christian Latin literature first saw the light at Rome, in the early years it was cultivated chiefly in Africa. Cyprian was writing in Latin while Rome was still celebrating the liturgy in Greek. In the fourth century there was a great awakening: Hilary, Ambrose and Jerome are worthy to rank with men like Athanasius and Basil.

The Latin Fathers did in fact owe a great deal to the East—Hilary had studied Greek philosophy, Ambrose was a disciple of Origen—but the spirit in which they used their Greek sources was entirely their own.

Christian poetry reached its full flowering in the fourth and fifth centuries. The Latin authors were more successful at this kind of writing than the Greek. Of the many poets of the period Ambrose, Prudentius and Paulinus of Nola were the chief. Several of the Fathers were mainly concerned with producing hymns. Hilary's were never taken into general use, but Ambrose was luckier with his—several of his hymns found a place in the liturgy and are still used today.

Prayer is still a spontaneous outpouring in the works of the Latin Fathers. Hilary and Ambrose¹ break into prayer even in their theological treatises. The moving thing about the Bishop of Milan is the note of conviction in his work; what is striking about the Bishop of Poitiers is the way he uses his intellect to promote the soul's quest for God.

HILARY OF POITIERS

(†367)

Hilary is known as the Athanasius of the West. He came of a pagan family and found his way to the faith by studying Holy Scripture. Although he was married, the clergy and people of his native town, Poitiers, chose him for their bishop.

The Emperor Constantius found his defence of the faith embarrassing and sent him into exile in the East. There he absorbed the riches of oriental theology and composed his main work, the treatise on the Trinity, from which the following prayers are taken.

The profundity of the thought, the close texture of the phrasing and the concision of the style add to the beauty and novelty of this essentially theological type of prayer, which might have been written today.

¹ Nothing by St. Augustine is included in this anthology: it would need a whole volume to do him justice.

To Hilary, as to Bonaventure and like-minded thinkers, theology is the wisdom evolved by souls in pursuit of God. As such, it naturally finds expression in prayer.

Prayer for Help

280 THE chief service I owe you in my life, as I well know, O God, all-powerful Father, is that every word and thought of mine should speak of you. The power of speech that you have bestowed on me can give me no greater pleasure than to serve you by preaching and to show an ignorant world or a protesting heretic what you are: the Father, the Father whose only Son is God.

But in saying this, I am merely saying what I want to do. If I am actually to do it, I must ask you for your help and mercy, ask you to fill with wind the sails I have hoisted for you and to carry me forward on my course—to breathe, that is, your Spirit into my faith and my confession of it, and to enable me to continue the preaching I have begun.

He who said, ‘Ask, and the gift will come; seek, and you shall find; knock and the door shall be opened to you’, is not untrue to his word. I then, needy in all conscience, will pray for what I need, and I will apply myself unremittingly to the study of your prophets and apostles, knocking at every door that is locked against my understanding; but it is for you to give me what I pray for, and to see that what I am looking for is there, and that the door opens when I knock. We are heavy with the lazy stupor that is ours by nature, and when we try to understand your nature or your attributes, the weakness of our minds keeps us within the limits of our natural ignorance; but the study of your teaching provides us with the elements of a real knowledge of you, and the obedience involved in faith carries us beyond natural opinion.

I am confident, therefore, that you will inspire the beginning of this hazardous enterprise and support it as it progresses, and that you will call me to share the spirit of the prophets and apostles, thereby enabling me to grasp their words in the sense in which they spoke them and to attach to the expressions they used the significance they gave them themselves. That is what I need; for what I mean to speak of they preached as a mystery: they spoke obscurely of you, the eternal God, Father eternally of the Only Begotten, who is also God; of you who alone have no Father; and of our one Lord Jesus Christ, born of you eternally, not to be accounted another God, really different from you, not to be represented as not born of you, who alone are God, and not to be acknowledged as other than the true God born of you, the true God and Father.¹

¹ St. Hilary, who had a great deal to do with the Arian controversy, is above all concerned to defend the divinity of Jesus Christ.

Thanksgiving for Faith

281 LET me speak to you, God of all power; and though I am but dust and ashes, yet, since I am bound to you by the bonds of love, let me speak freely.

Before I came to know you, I was nothing. I had the misfortune not to know the meaning of life, I was without understanding of myself, I was nothing of what I am now. It was your mercy that gave me life. I have no doubt that you decided it would be good for me to be born, for you are good, you had no need of me and you would not have given me life if it had been to my detriment. . . .

The words that came from your own Son's lips, your only Son's, words preserved in the sacred books, are evidence that as God the Only Begotten, your Son was born of you, the unbegotten God, and that as man, he was born of the virgin for that mysterious end, my salvation. You so beget him as to be in him yourself; he is so born of you that his birth is within you and he too remains in you. . . .

This is the faith I was taught; I am steeped in it and there is no remedy. Forgive me, all-powerful God, but I cannot change my attitude to it; I can only die for it.

This world that now is has let too long a time elapse before presenting me with these men and what I regard as their impious doctrines. They have come too late for my faith to take them as masters, for I have had my instruction from you. Before I had even heard their names, I had come to believe in you and had had new birth of you, and ever since, I have been yours.

Profession of Faith

282 As long as I live and breathe the breath you have given me, holy Father, all-powerful God, I will acknowledge that from all eternity you have been not only God but Father. I will never have the folly and impiety to set up as judge of your omnipotence and your mysteries, to prefer my own poor thought to what religion holds about your infinity or faith teaches about your eternity. I will never assert that there was a time when your Wisdom, your Virtue, your Word, the unbegotten God, my Lord Jesus Christ, was not with you.

The natural poverty and imperfection of our language do not affect my thinking about you to the extent of reducing my faith to silence because my speech is inadequate. If in our case word, virtue and wisdom are each the product of a movement within us, in yours they can be nothing but the generation of the perfect God who is your Word, Wisdom and Virtue.

He will always be inseparable from you, born, as it has been shown that he is, of you, and bearing the names of eternal properties of yours. He was born in such a way as to give expression to you alone, his Author. And faith in his infinity will not suffer if we say that he was born before all eternity.

Among the things known to men by their natural powers you have given us many, of which, although we do not know the cause, we do know the effects. Where there is natural ignorance, there is something we have to take on trust. Thus, when I look at your heavens according to my own lights, with these weak eyes of mine, I am confident that they are your heavens: that and nothing but that. When I consider how the stars circle round them and reappear year by year, when I look at the stars that shine in the spring, the north star¹ and the morning-star, each one allotted a different task and service to perform, then, although I do not understand them, I realise that you, God, are in them.

When I see your sea surging so wonderfully, as I cannot understand the origin of the waters or the reason for their measured movement to and fro, I have recourse to faith, as reason bids me, the reason itself for all this being beyond me; and so, although I do not know these things, I do know that you are in them.

When I turn my mind to the earth, which accepts all seeds sown in it and by virtue of causes unknown to me makes them disintegrate, then gives them life, multiplies them and strengthens them, I find nothing in all this that I can understand with the notions I now possess; but my ignorance helps me to understand you, because, as I cannot account for these natural phenomena which are so serviceable to me, I am led to realise that you created them simply for my convenience.

Ignorant of myself also, I yet have experience of myself, and this experience I owe to you, who in addition to a knowledge of the principles of our nature have also given us, for our delight, an intimate awareness of that nature.

And just as ignorance of myself does not prevent me from knowing and worshipping you, so I will not allow ignorance of you to make me abandon my faith in your omnipotence. My mind shall not seize on the origin of your only Son and claim it as fit material for its speculations; nothing in me shall be exalted above my Creator and God. . . .

I pray you, keep intact this faith that I owe you, and grant that as long as I live, I may heed what my conscience says about it. May I always hold

¹ The reference is to the Pleiad and the Great Bear and Little Bear.

to the faith I professed when I was born again, hold to the symbol recited when I was baptised in the name of Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

May I worship you, our Father, and worship your Son with you; may I be as your Holy Spirit would have me to be, who proceeds from you through your only Son. The proper witness of my faith is he who said: 'Father, all I have is yours, and all you have is mine'—my Lord, Jesus Christ, who is always in you, always coming from you, always with you and always God. Praise is his throughout eternity. Amen.

AMBROSE OF MILAN

(†397)

Ambrose, the governor of the province of Milan, was chosen bishop of that city after the death of the Arian Auxentius, while he was still a catechumen. He was remarkable for his independent attitude to the emperor and his generosity to the poor; his chief care was to instruct his people. He had the consolation of baptising the illustrious Augustine.

His homilies on Scripture borrow freely from Origen, even to the extent of reproducing the devotional language that makes the works of the Alexandrian exegete so moving. He also did much to promote ecclesiastical chant in the West. Several of the hymns he composed are still sung today in the liturgical office.

Prayer for Forgiveness

283 JESUS, I wish you would let me wash your feet, since it was through walking about in me that you soiled them. I wish you would give me the task of wiping the stains from your feet, because it was my behaviour that put them there. But where can I get the running water I need to wash your feet? If I have no water, at least I have tears: let me wash your feet with them, and wash myself at the same time.

To what do I owe the blessing of hearing you say of me: 'Many sins are forgiven him, because of his great love'? I must confess that my debt was greater than hers and that more was forgiven me, since I was called to the priesthood from the noisy contentious life of the law-courts and the terrifying responsibilities of public administration. Therefore I fear I shall be considered ungrateful if I love you less than she did, when the debt forgiven me was greater than the debt forgiven her. . . .

Watch over your gift, Lord; keep safe the present you made me, even though I shrank from it, knowing that I was not fit to bear the name of bishop because I had devoted myself to this world's business. It is through your grace that I am what I am—and even so, I am on a lower level than the other bishops and behind them all in merit.

Yet, as I too have had work laid on me for your holy Church, see that

my work bears fruit. I was a lost soul when you called me to the priesthood; let me not become a lost priest as well.

Above all, teach me to sympathise with sinners from the depths of my heart. That is the supreme virtue, for Scripture says: 'You shall not gloat over Juda's sons on the day of their downfall; you shall not boast to them on the day of their discomfiture.'

May I show compassion whenever anyone falls and his sin comes to my notice. Instead of reproving him, proudly, may I grieve and lament with him. In weeping for others, may I weep for myself, so that I can say: 'Thamar is in the right, not I.' ¹

Hymn to the Church

284 MAY God come and create this woman [the Church] to be Christ's helper, as the other was Adam's. Not that Christ needs a helper but that we, needing and longing for Christ's grace, must have the Church to help us reach it. Now is the time of her birth and her building, now is the woman fashioned and formed.

Scripture therefore uses a novel expression: 'Apostles and prophets', it says, 'are the foundation on which we were built.' And now indeed that spiritual house is rising; a holy priesthood is being formed.

Come, Lord God, fashion this woman, build this city. May your Child come too, for I believe him when he says: 'He it is shall build me the city.'

See the woman that is the mother of us all, the spiritual house, the city that will endure for ever, since it cannot die. This is the city of Jerusalem, to be seen now on earth but one day to be carried aloft in greater glory than Elias—for high as Elias went, he went by himself. It will be borne on high with more dignity than Enoch, of whose death, again, there is no record. He was taken away for fear that his will might change its aim and corrupt his heart; but there is no question of that with the Church—Christ loves the Church, his bride, because she is so splendid and holy, without a spot or wrinkle anywhere. And her lot will be better than Enoch's, since now it is the whole body that will be taken up to heaven, whereas then it was one man only. Such is the Church's hope—and it will be realised: she will indeed be taken up to heaven. My word may not be good enough for you, but Paul's ought to be: believe him, because Christ spoke in him when he said: 'We shall be swept up into the clouds to meet Christ in the air, and so we shall be with the Lord for ever.'

¹ The whole of this chapter, in which Ambrose paraphrases the episodes of the sinful woman of Magdala and of Jesus weeping at the tomb, might well be quoted. Its resemblance to the extract from Origen given in no. 63 above is evident.

Prayers for the Dead¹

I

285 SINCE no one, Lord, can desire more for another than he wishes for himself, I ask you not to separate me when I am dead from those who were so dear to me while I lived.

Lord, I beg you that where I am, they too may be with me. As I have not been able to see much of them here, let me enjoy their company in heaven for ever.

I beseech you, God most high, to grant a speedy resurrection to these children whom I love so much. As the span of their life on earth was cut short, make it up to them by calling them the sooner to eternal life.

II

286 IF anyone is in danger, the priest is in danger as well; if any sinner's grief is known to him, the priest grieves with him; whatever others suffer, he also bears, and when others are free of the danger that beset them, he is free of it too.

My heart bleeds because a man has been taken from us whose like we can scarcely hope to find.² We can but beg and implore you, Lord, on whom alone we can rely, to make him live again in his sons.

You watch over the insignificant, Lord, and keep them humble; protect us, then, whose trust is all in you. Give rest to your servant Theodosius, the rest that you keep for your saints; and may his soul return whence it came. There he will no longer feel death's sting, and he will know that death is not the end of human life but the end of sin. The death he has died is a death to sin, and now there can be no room in him for sin. He will rise again and enter on a higher kind of life.

Morning Hymn: Aeterne Rerum Conditor

287 CREATOR of the world, O God
eternal, Lord of night and day,
at whose command the seasons come
and, lest they weary us, depart:

the bird that watches all night long
and cries aloud to pierce the dark
and guide the lightless traveller
now sounds the approach of day;

¹ The first of these prayers is taken from the sermon on Valentinian's death, the second from Ambrose's sermon on the death of Theodosius.

² The Emperor Theodosius.

the morning-star, aroused from sleep,
draws back the veils that shroud the sky,
while errant sinners at the sound
take fright and leave the hellward road;

the sailor sloughs his weariness,
the angry sea grows mild again,
the rock on which the Church is built
at cock-crow weeps his sin away.

Up, then, and out: the cock has crowed
to prod the sluggard from his sleep;
he puts the stay-abed to shame
and proves him late who says, 'Too soon'.

At cock-crow hope returns and health
flows back to wilting minds and limbs,
the murderer's knife is stowed away,
the weak find trust again and faith.

Jesus, we fall; a look from you
will pull us firmly to our feet:
sin quails and falters at your glance,
and guilt dissolves in timely tears.

Shine on our torpid minds, O Light,
and set the dormant thoughts astir;
and may our earliest action be
to speak the name of God in prayer.

Evening Hymn

288 O GOD, Creator of the earth
and Ruler of the sky, the days
you wrap in all-adorning light,
the nights you fold in blissful sleep
to make the tautened limbs unlock
and wait their turn for work again,
to soothe the mind that's overwrought
and drive anxiety away.

Now that the day has run its course
and night is on its way, we sing
the hymn you claim of us and pray
for pardon of our wickedness.

You the deep centre of our hearts,
 O thrill our voices into song,
 O draw our love unceasingly,
 O take our minds' due reverence.

So, though the night may shut the day
 deep in the dungeons of the dark,
 faith shall know no obscurity:
 faith shining, dark shall be as light.

Let not our minds sink down in sleep:
 to sleep may sin resign itself,
 while watchful faith with cooling care
 chills the hot shades our brains have raised.

Rid of all slippery, smooth-faced thoughts,
 may we in peace so dream of you
 that no contrivance of the Enemy
 may startle us to wakening.

Christ let us pray and pray his Father,
 the Father's Spirit and the Christ's:
 O One in power and One in deed,
 watch over us, One Trinity.

PRUDENTIUS

(c. 405)

Prudentius was born at Saragossa. He lived in Spain all his life and held important office there, but on his retirement he withdrew into solitude and devoted himself to the service of God. His poetical works, in eight books, entitle him to the highest place among the ancient Christian poets of the West. The following hymns, taken from the first book, 'Cathemerinon Liber' (Hymns For Every Day), are still to be found in the Roman liturgy.

The Bird of Dawning

289 THE bird that knows day's imminence
 gives warning that the dawn is near,
 as Christ, our souls' Awakener,
 bids us rise and live his life.

'Fold up,' he cries, 'the coverlet,
 shake off that sickly drowsiness;
 be watchful, sober, moderate,
 be chaste—it's time: I'm almost there.'

Let us, then, call aloud to him,
 prayerful, repentant, continent:
 for prayer put forth unceasingly
 deters the candid heart from sleep.

O Christ, dispel our somnolence,
 O break the bonds night holds us in,
 O quell inveterate sinfulness
 and pour your light and make things new.

Hymn for the Holy Innocents

290 THE tyrant broods uneasily:
 a prince is born who shall be king
 and rule the house of Israel
 and occupy great David's throne.

Witless, he raves: 'We are deposed:
 he that shall oust us is at hand.
 Go, guard, and draw your skilful sword,
 and foul his little nest with blood.'

So fell those flowers of martyrdom
 when life was at its dawn for them:
 to pluck Christ up he dashed them down,
 as wild winds dash the new-born roses.

Are these the first blood-offerings
 to come before the Christ—a band
 of babies playing on the altar-steps
 with palms and coronets?

What use this rash enormity?
 What profit in this wasteful wrong?
 So many deaths, and Christ alone
 escapes from Herod's questing hand.

SEDULIUS

Sedulius came from the south of Gaul or from Spain and was a priest. He was the author of the 'Carmen Paschale', a poem dealing with the great works of God.

The hymns given below are taken from a poem dedicated to Christ, in which the various stanzas begin with the letters of the alphabet one after another, in their proper sequence. The Roman Breviary still uses these hymns in the Christmas liturgy.

A Solis Ortus Cardine (Christmas)

291 AT both the confines of the earth,
where suns arise again and set,
Christ shall be sung, the Prince whose birth
puts us in maiden Mary's debt.

Blessed the Author of the world,
who took a body like a slave:
to save through flesh from loss incurred
the flesh he'd made, his flesh he gave.

Closed was his mother's womb before,
still closed when Grace came through the door.
Sweet virgin! she had not foreseen
that Heaven in her to earth would lean.

Down to her spotless ark God came,
the very temple for his name.
Did ever virgin have a son?
This one God for her child had won.

Egress she gave to him at length
whose coming Gabriel had declared,
whose presenec John's exultant strength
adoring, with his mother shared.

Freely he chose, possessing all,
the hay-strewn bed, the cattle-stall;
and he who gives the birds their bread
himself on meagre milk was fed.

'Glory,' saints and angels sang:
heaven with their praises rang;
while shepherds saw with wondering eyes
the Shepherd who had made the world.

Hymn for the Epiphany

292 HEROD, why this impiety?
Can Christ awake anxiety?
He'll let your little kingdom live
who has immortal crowns to give.

Intent upon the beckoning star,
 the obedient sages followed far,
 and in its light they sought the Light
 and by their gifts they showed his might. . . .

Lambent the waves the limbs adored
 of heaven's Lamb, their humble Lord;
 and washing him they cleansing won
 for sins that we, not he, had done. . . .

Nature beheld her usual sway
 suspended in a novel way:
 for water, in the Saviour's name
 like wine decanted, wine became.

PAULINUS OF NOLA

(†431)

A son of one of the leading patrician families of Rome, Paulinus was first a pupil and then a disciple of Ausonius. He was baptised at Bordeaux, gave away part of his fortune and lived a retired life with his wife, in Spain to begin with, and later at Nola, near the tomb of St. Felix.

In addition to his correspondence, which kept him in touch with the most brilliant society of the time, Paulinus left poetical works of considerable value, the most important being the 'Carmina Natalicia' in honour of St. Felix of Nola.

The Praises of the Cross

- 293 O CROSS, sign of God's great affection,
 heaven's glory, men's eternal salvation,
 terror of the wicked, strength of the just,
 light of the faithful. O cross,
 you enabled God-made-man to die like a slave
 on earth for our salvation, and man in heaven
 to reign with God. The light of truth shone bright
 because of you, and impious night took flight.
 When the nations took to believing,
 it was you that destroyed their temples.
 You are men's link with Christ, the Mediator:
 you brought them peace through the covenant made on you.
 You are man's ladder, whereby he may climb into heaven.

Be, too, a pillar and hold up the house of the faithful,
and, as our anchor, let not our boat go adrift.
So will it be if we put our trust in the cross
and win through the cross a crown.

Inscription for a Church

293a THIS temple has two porches,
as the Church has two testaments;
but the temple and the Church
are each blessed with one fount.
The old law gives strength to the new,
the new completes the old;
in the old was hope,
in the new is faith.
But old and new
are joined by the grace of Christ:
which is why a fountain
has been put in the space between.

ANONYMOUS

Evening Hymn¹

294 O CHRIST, essential Day, O Light
that peels the darkness from the night,
we know you for the Heart of light,
who tell the blessedness of light.

O holy Master of the night,
we beg defence against the night
and rest against your breast this night
and peaceful sleep throughout the night.

Let not our bed our prison be,
its governor the Enemy,
our bodies' crime complicity
with hell-inspired lubricity.

Bid sleep caress the heavy eyes
while prayers from wakeful hearts arise,
and fold your hand until it lies
about your lovers, bastion-wise.

¹ This hymn formed part of compline in quite a number of the medieval liturgies. The Dominicans still use it at compline during Lent.

See what snares the foe prepares,
 see what villainy he dares—
 in vain: your blood has bought your cares
 for us, your guidance victory bears.

Remember, Lord, the body's weight
 and, lest the will come limping late
 and holy purposes must wait,
 keep watch beside the senses' gate.

INSCRIPTIONS IN THE ROMAN CHURCHES

The inscriptions adorning tombs of martyrs, churches and baptisteries must be included in the literature of the patristic period. Pope Damasus had a search made in the catacombs for martyrs' tombs and ornamented many of them with inscriptions or tituli in verse. Leo the Great, Paulinus of Nola and others also contributed inscriptions.

For St. Agnes

295 THEY say her parents had to hold her back
 when the mournful trumpet sounded in her ears,
 but suddenly she darted from her nurse
 and stood, defiant, where the tyrant burned
 to give her noble body to the flames.

What veterans might fear, her puny strength
 despised. Calmly she spread her hair about her limbs,
 lest mortal eyes should desecrate God's temple.

Pride of the pure, whom Damasus reveres,
 promote his prayers, bright maiden, dry his tears.

Inscription in the Lateran Baptistery

296 THE brood born here to live in heaven has life
 from water and the fructifying Spirit.

Sinner, seek your cleansing in this stream
 that takes the old and gives a new man back.

No barrier can divide where life unites:
 one faith, one fount, one Spirit make one people.

A virgin still, the Church gives birth to sons
 conceived of God, delivered in the water.

Washed in this bath the stains will float away
that mark the guilt of Adam and your own.

The stream that flows below sprang from the wounded Christ
to wash the whole world clean and give it life.

Sons of the water, think no more of earth;
heaven will give you joy; in heaven hope.

Think not your sins too many or too great:
birth in this stream is birth to holiness.

*Inscriptions in the Consignatorium*¹

297 FRESH from the heavenly stream again the sheep
receive their mark from Christ the Shepherd's hand.

O water-born, go where the Spirit calls:
seek unity, and all his gifts are yours.

You who have taken up the cross, avoid
the tempests of the world: so bids this place.²

TE DEUM

The Te Deum has been attributed to Hilary, Ambrose and Augustine in turn. G. Morin and A. Burn tried to prove that it was by a friend of Paulinus of Nola's, Niceta, Bishop of Remesiana, who died in 414; but the famous chant is just as likely to have been composed out of several hymns joined together.

298 O GOD, we praise you,
as Lord we confess you.
Eternal Father, all the earth reveres you.
The angels, the heavens and all the powers,
the cherubim and seraphim unceasingly proclaim:
Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God of hosts.
Heaven and earth are full
of your majesty and glory.
The apostles' glorious choir,
the prophets' eminent company,
the shining army of martyrs
praise you.

¹ The place where the newly baptised were anointed.

² Probably an allusion to the martyrdom of St. Peter.

Holy Church throughout the world confesses
you the Father, infinite in majesty,
your true and only Son, the venerable,
the Spirit, too, who assists us.

You are a glorious King, O Christ,
the Father's eternal Son;
yet at your coming to take upon you
the human nature that you would release,
a virgin's womb had no dismay for you.
Drawing death's sting,
you opened the kingdom of heaven
to all who would believe.
You sit at God's right hand,
sharing the Father's glory;
and we believe that you will come and judge us.
We beg you, therefore, help your servants,
since you have redeemed them
with your precious blood.
With the saints be our lot
in eternal glory.

Save your people, Lord,
bless the race of your choice;
guide and support them always.
Day by day we bless you;
we will praise your name for ever,
yes, for ever.

Out of your goodness, Lord,
keep us from sin today.
Have mercy on us, Lord,
have mercy on us.
Lord, let your mercy rest on us,
for we put our trust in you.
In you, Lord, we place our confidence;
may we never be disappointed.

4

The Eastern Liturgies

By the third century, liturgical usages, which at first had been the same everywhere, were different at Antioch, Alexandria and Rome. As each great metropolis extended the field of its missionary labours, it also extended the area in which its own usages were observed. As Duchesne says, it was only natural that the practice of the mother church should be the model for the daughter churches; so that the liturgical province came to be coterminous with the ecclesiastical province.

Jurisdiction was exercised in the East by four patriarchates. Asia Minor was controlled from Constantinople, Syria and Mesopotamia from Antioch, Palestine to the Red Sea from Jerusalem, and the lands beyond the Red Sea towards the Tigris, together with Chaldaea and Persia, from Alexandria.

We have seen that there were two types of liturgy, represented by the Apostolic Constitutions and the Euchologium of Serapion, as early as the fourth century. Both of these were to put forth innumerable branches.¹ At the same time, improvisation was beginning to give way to set forms, which, though not absolutely compulsory, yet marked a stage on the way to the definite crystallisation of the liturgy. By the fifth century, the prayers were more or less fixed in form. In the East, however, the liturgy remained a living thing, which went on growing, developing and changing throughout the centuries. The Dér-Balyzeh papyrus shows how the liturgy of St. Mark was being transformed in the sixth century.

In the Latin mass, the canon never changes; the only variable elements are the surrounding proper and the preface. In the Eastern rites, the part that corresponds to the Latin canon, together with the preface, is a single unvarying whole; but whereas there is only one Latin canon, the Eastern rites have more than one—the Syriac liturgy has as many as seventy anaphoras, which the celebrant may use as he pleases. A few of these are given below, to show the resemblances and points of difference.

¹ As a matter of fact, the only difference of any note between the two types of liturgy is that the great intercessory prayer for the living and the dead is not in the same position in both cases. In the Syrian type it comes at the end of the anaphora, in the Egyptian at the beginning.

THE SYRIAN TYPE: THE LITURGY OF ST. JAMES

The liturgy which is generally considered to be the oldest of the eastern group is the one called the Liturgy of St. James,¹ although its connection with that apostle (the first Bishop of Jerusalem) is merely nominal. First found at Antioch, it was also used at Jerusalem and in Arabia, Syria, Armenia, Georgia, the Slavonic countries, Greece and Ethiopia, as the manuscript tradition shows.

Its latest editor, Dom Mercier, thinks that it dates from the fourth and fifth centuries. But is the form in which we now have it the original one, or is it only an elaboration of an older version? And to what period does the source belong? These are questions to which no answer can as yet be given.

The Liturgy of St. James has been supplanted by the Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom and is now used only in the Syriac rite. The following analysis will help the reader to place the extracts in their proper setting.

I. MASS OF THE CATECHUMENS

1. Preparatory prayers.
2. Prayers at the entry of the celebrant and ministers.
3. Prayer at the incensing.
4. Blessing of the deacon.
5. Prayer during the procession.
6. Trisagion.
7. Readings (epistle, gospel).
8. Prayers between the two readings.
9. Prayers after the readings.
10. Dismissal of the catechumens.

II. MASS OF THE FAITHFUL

Offertory

11. Greater entry or procession.
12. Offertory.
13. Incensing.
14. *Symbol of the faith.*
15. *Kiss of peace.*
- Prayers preparatory to the anaphora.
16. Prayer for all needs, or greater litanies.
17. Prayer for the celebrant.
18. Prayer for the people.
19. Prayer of oblation.
20. Prayer 'of the veil'.

¹ When a liturgy is attributed to someone, by 'liturgy' is meant 'anaphora'.

21. *Great eucharistic prayer, or anaphora.*
 Preface and Sanctus.
 Commemoration of creation and the incarnation.
 Institution of the eucharist.
 Commemoration of the redemption.
 Epiclesis, or invocation of the Holy Spirit.
22. *Great intercessory prayer.*
 Prayer for the living and the dead.
 Commemoration of the saints.
Communion.
23. Pater Noster.
24. Paraphrase of the Pater Noster.
25. Blessing.
26. Elevation.
27. Breaking of the host and mixing of the two species.
28. Prayers before communion.
29. Prayers after communion.

III. DISMISSAL

MASS OF THE CATECHUMENS

Preparation for Mass (2)¹

299 **BENEFACITOR** and King of all the ages, Creator of all that is: bid your Church welcome as she approaches you in the wake of your Christ. Provide each of us to the full with what he needs, make us all achieve perfection, enable us to receive your gift of sanctification.

Gather us closer to your holy, catholic, apostolic Church, which you acquired by the precious blood of your only Son, our God and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

Blessing and glory be yours, and his, and your holy, all-holy, life-giving Spirit's, now and for ever, age after age. Amen.

The Kyrie (Litany) (8)

After the Alleluia, the deacon says the litany.

All reply: Kyrie eleison.

300 **O LORD**, almighty, heavenly, God of our fathers, we beseech you to hear us.

That the whole world may be at peace and all the holy churches united, we beseech you to hear us.

¹ The numbers refer to the catalogue, above, in which all the main prayers are listed.

That N., our holy patriarch, and all the clergy and the Christ-loving people may have salvation and help from you, we beseech you to hear us.

For our pious, Christ-loving king and all his household and army, and especially that they may be victorious, we beseech you to hear us.

For the royal city, holy possession of Christ our God, and for every other city and district, we beseech you to hear us.

That we may be delivered from every tribulation, from all anger, danger, constraint and captivity, from the bitterness of death and from our sins, we beseech you to hear us.

And on the people here present, awaiting the great wealth of your mercies, we implore you to have compassion and mercy.

O God, save your people, bless your chosen race; in your mercy and pity visit the world; increase the strength of the Christian body through the power of the precious and life-giving cross, the intercession of our all-holy and blessed Lady, the mother of God, and the prayers of the Forerunner, of your apostles and of all your saints. We implore you, most merciful Lord, we beseech you, hear our prayers and have pity on us.

The people say 'Kyrie eleison' three times.

MASS OF THE FAITHFUL

Prayer at the Kiss of Peace (15)

Before giving the kiss of peace, the priest says:

- 301 GOD and Lord of all that is, make us worthy of this hour, unworthy that we are, for you have men's interests at heart. Cleanse us from all deceit and hypocrisy, that we may be united one to another by the bonds of peace and love. May we draw strength and holiness, O God, from knowing you, through your only Son, our Lord and God and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

Blessing be yours, and his, and your holy, all-holy, life-giving Spirit's, now and for ever, age after age. Amen.

The deacon says:

Let us stand with proper reverence and pray peacefully to the Lord.

The priest:

You are the God of peace and mercy, of love and compassion and kindness: you and your only Son and your all-holy Spirit, now and for ever, age after age.

The people:

Amen.

The priest:

Peace be with you all.

The people:

May your spirit, too, be at peace.

The archdeacon:

Let us greet one another with a holy kiss.

The Deacon's Litany
Otherwise Called the Prayer for All Needs (16)

302 LET us peacefully pray to the Lord.

Save us, pity us, have mercy, give us protection, O God, of your kindness.

Let us pray to the Lord that he would send us peace from on high, show his divine favour to us men and save our souls.

Let us pray to the Lord that the whole world may be at peace and all the holy churches united.

Let us pray to the Lord for this holy monastery and for the Catholic and apostolic Church that stretches from one end of the world to the other.

Let us pray to the Lord that N., our holy patriarch, and all the clergy and the Christ-loving people may have salvation and help from him.

Let us pray to the Lord for our devout and orthodox kings, who hold their crowns of God, and for all their household and army; let us pray that they may receive help, protection and victory from heaven.

Let us pray to the Lord for the royal city, holy possession of Christ our God, for every other city and district and for all who dwell in them devoutly according to the orthodox faith; let us pray that they may have peace and security.

Let us pray to the Lord for those who are bearing fruit and doing good works in God's holy churches; for those who remember the poor, widows and orphans, strangers and the needy; and for those who have bidden us call them to mind in our prayers.

Let us pray to the Lord for the old and the feeble, the sick, the weary and those troubled by evil spirits; let us pray that they may speedily obtain relief and healing from God.

Let us pray to the Lord for virgins, for those who keep themselves chaste, those leading the ascetic life, those living in the holy state of marriage, and those of our holy fathers and brethren who carry on the contest on mountain-sides, in rock-fastnesses and in caverns under the earth.

Let us pray to the Lord for all Christians who are travelling, whether by land or by sea, for those in foreign countries, for the captives, exiles and prisoners among our brethren, and for those beset by the bitterness of slavery; let us pray that every one of them may return home peacefully and joyfully.

Let us pray to the Lord for those of our fathers and brethren praying with us—those here with us now and those who have been or will be: let us pray that they may be willing and ready and may labour unsparingly.

Let us pray to the Lord for all Christian souls exhausted by suffering and in need of God's mercy and help; let us pray that the erring may be converted, the sick restored to health, captives set free and rest bestowed on those of our fathers and brethren who have fallen asleep.

Let us pray to the Lord that our sins may be remitted and our misdeeds forgiven; let us pray for deliverance from every tribulation, from all anger, danger and constraint and from foreign invasion.

More especially let us pray to the Lord that the weather may be temperate, the rains moderate, the dew gently falling, fruit plentiful, the season a good one for the crops and the year crowned by God's bounty.

Let us pray particularly that our prayer may gain hearing and acceptance from God, that the wealth of his mercy and compassion may descend on us all, and that we may be considered worthy of the kingdom of heaven.

Let us commemorate our lady Mary, the all-holy, unspotted, more than glorious, blessed, mother of God and ever virgin; let us remember as well the saints and the blessed—the glorious prophet, forerunner and baptist, John; the holy apostles; the first deacon and martyr, Stephen; the prophets Moses, Aaron, Elias, Eliseus, Samuel, David and Daniel; and all the saints and the just: that through their prayers and intercession we may all receive mercy.

And let us implore the Lord our God to accept these gifts, these precious offerings with the air of heaven about them, gifts that defy description, spotless, glorious things, inspiring fear and awe, an oblation worthy of God. Let us pray for the salvation of our venerable father, the priest here presenting them.

The people say 'Kyrie eleison' three times.

Anaphora or Eucharistic Prayer (21)

The priest:

303 THE love of God the Father and the grace of our Lord and God and Saviour, Jesus Christ, be with you all. May the gift of the all-holy Spirit be bestowed upon you.

The people:

Be it so with you too.

The priest:

Let us set our minds and hearts on the things above.

The people:

They are fixed on the Lord.

The priest:

Let us give thanks to the Lord.

The people:

It is right and proper that we should.

The priest:

It is indeed right and proper, it is only fitting and what our duty requires of us that we should give you praise and hymns and blessing, worship, glory and thanks, Creator of all things, visible and invisible. Eternal blessings proceed from you as from a treasure-house: you are the Source of life and immortality, the God and Lord of the universe.

The heavens sing your praises, the heavens above the heavens too and all the powers there; the sun, the moon and all the hosts of stars; the sea, the earth and all that is in them;

the heavenly Jerusalem, the elect gathered together, the assembly of the firstborn whose names are recorded in heaven, the spirits of the just and the prophets, the souls of the martyrs and apostles;

the angels, archangels, thrones, dominations, principedoms and virtues and powers, the cherubim with their many eyes and the six-winged seraphim, hiding their faces with two of their wings, hiding their feet with two more, with the other two flying.

All these cry out to one another—for they never rest their voices, never sink into silence, as they acknowledge their God. Their triumphal hymn

tells of your magnificence and glory. Clear the sound of it as they sing, full and reverent their voices as they say:

The people:

Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts. Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosannah in high heaven. Blessed is he that comes in the name of the Lord. Hosannah in high heaven.

Standing, the priest makes the sign of the cross over the offerings and says:

Holy¹ you are, O King of all the ages, Lord and Giver of life. Holy your only Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom you made all that is. Holy, too, your Spirit, the all-holy, who probes all things to their depths and sees the innermost recesses of your being, O God, O Father.

Bowing down, the priest says:

Holy you are, almighty, all-powerful, terrible, kindly, compassionate, full of pity for your creation. From a clod of earth you fashioned man; you made him an image of yourself, made him like yourself; and you gave him paradise for his enjoyment. And when this favoured creature disobeyed your orders and fell, you did not scorn him and leave him to his own devices; but like the understanding Father that you are, you provided for his instruction, speaking to him through the law and sending the prophets to teach him.

Then you sent into the world your only Son, our Lord Jesus Christ: his coming meant the restoration of the image—the pieces were put together again. He came down from heaven and took flesh of the Holy Ghost and of holy Mary, the ever-virgin, the God-bearing; he lived among men and all that he did was for the salvation of our race.

When the time came for him freely to accept the death that through the cross was to issue in life (he the sinless dying for us sinners), on the night when he was given up—or rather, when he gave himself up, that the world might have life and be saved—

Here the priest stands up again, takes the bread, makes the sign of the cross over it and says:

—he took bread in his hands (those holy, spotless hands of his, immaculate, immortal), looked up to heaven and offered the bread to you, our God and Father; he gave thanks, blessed and sanctified the bread, broke it

¹ In the liturgies of the Syrian type, the celebrant effects the transition to the next section of the prayer by dwelling on the idea of holiness, suggested by the Sanctus.

and gave a piece to each of his holy disciples and apostles (O great their privilege), saying:

Take this and eat it: it is my body, broken for you and distributed that sins may be remitted.

The people:

Amen.

Then he takes the chalice and, making the sign of the cross over it, says:

In the same way, after supper he took a cup and mixed wine and water in it. Looking up to heaven and offering the cup to you, our God and Father, he gave thanks, blessed and sanctified it, filled it with the Holy Spirit and gave it to his holy disciples and apostles (O great their privilege), saying:

Drink some of it, all of you: this is my blood, the blood of the new testament, shed for you and for the multitudes, given that sins may be remitted.

The people:

Amen.

The priest continues:

Do this in memory of me. Every time you eat this bread and drink this cup, you will be proclaiming the death of the Son of Man and confessing his resurrection, until he returns.

The deacon answers:

So do we believe and confess.

The people:

We proclaim your death, Lord; we confess your resurrection.

The priest makes the sign of the cross and, bowing down, says:

We too, sinners though we are, call to mind those holy sufferings of his that brought us life; we commemorate his saving cross, his death and burial, his resurrection from the dead on the third day, his going up to heaven, where he sits at the right hand of our God and Father, and the second visit he has yet to make us—an occasion of majesty and fear, when he will come in glory to judge the living and the dead and to give us all what our conduct deserves.

Spare us, O Lord, our God (*thrice*)—for that must appeal to your loving heart. We offer you, Lord, this awe-inspiring sacrifice that requires no

shedding of blood, and we beg you not to deal with us as our sins deserve or to give us the reward we merit for our transgressions; but as your gentleness and your regard for men, which passes all telling, will prompt you, annul the decree against us, your suppliants; cancel the decree and give us those gifts of yours in heaven that will last for ever, gifts that no eye has seen and no ear heard of; yes, O God, it has never entered any man's mind what gifts you have in store for them that love you. Do not cast off your people, kind Lord, because of me and my sins (*thrice*).

The Church, your people, implores you.

The people:

Have mercy on us, Lord God, almighty Father.

The priest stands up again and says:

Have mercy on us, Lord God, almighty Father.

Have mercy on us, O God, our Saviour.

Have mercy on us, O God, for your mercy is great; and send down your all-holy Spirit upon us and upon these holy gifts.

Bowing down, he says:

The Lord and Giver of life, enthroned with you, God the Father, and with your only Son: ruling with you, consubstantial and co-eternal;¹ the Spirit who spoke in the law and the prophets and in your new testament; who came down like a dove on our Lord Jesus Christ in the river Jordan and stayed with him; who descended on your holy apostles like tongues of flame in that upper room in your holy and glorious city of Sion on the holy Feast of Pentecost—

He stands up and says:

—that same all-holy Spirit send down, Lord, upon us and upon these holy gifts, that coming in holiness, beneficence and glory, he may sanctify this bread and make it the holy body of Christ—

The people:

Amen.

The priest:

—and may sanctify this chalice and make it Christ's precious blood.

The people:

Amen.

¹ The divinity of the Holy Spirit is here clearly affirmed.

The Great Intercession (22)

304 WE offer you the sacrifice, Lord, for your holy places, which you honoured by manifesting in them the divinity of your Christ and sending them your all-holy Spirit. We offer the sacrifice particularly for Sion, the holy and glorious, the mother of all the churches, and for your catholic and apostolic Church throughout the world.

Grant her, Lord, in abundance the gifts your all-holy Spirit has to give.

Remember, Lord, our holy fathers the bishops, who everywhere in the world faithfully teach the true word. Remember especially our holy father, N., and all his clergy and priests, grant him old age with honour and keep him a long time yet as the shepherd of your people, devout and venerable.

Remember, Lord, the venerable priests in this and every place, the deacons who serve Christ, and all the other ministers—every degree, in fact, of the Church's hierarchy—as well as our brethren in Christ and the entire Christ-loving people.

Remember, Lord, the priests standing with us now,¹ at the time of this holy offering, before your holy altar, ready to present to you the holy sacrifice that involves no shedding of blood. Give to them and to us the words we need, that when we open our mouths it may be for the glory and praise of your all-holy name.

Remember, Lord—for great are your mercy and compassion—remember me, poor sinner that I am and a servant unworthy of such a Master as you. May your mercy and compassion move you to help me. O deliver me, free me from my persecutors, Lord, Lord of the powers; and as sin has attained such proportions in me, let me have your grace in greater abundance still.

Remember, Lord, the deacons standing round your holy altar. Grant that their lives may be blameless, keep them without fault in the exercise of the diaconate and enable them to gain a firm footing.

Remember, Lord, the royal city, your own holy possession, O God, and every other city and district and all who dwell in them devoutly according to the orthodox faith. Grant them peace and security.

Remember, Lord, the devotion of our king and his queen and their love of Christ; remember his household and army. Send them help and victory from heaven; take shield and buckler yourself, stand with them and assist

¹ Concelebration was the rule at this date: i.e. all the priests present joined with the bishop in celebrating the eucharist, as a sign of their unity with him. The practice has never died out in the east; it is still kept up today, even in the churches in communion with Rome.

them in the fray. Subject to the king all barbarous and bellicose nations, all peoples bent on war; direct his counsels, that we may live calm and tranquil lives, with devotion and dignity.

Remember, Lord, all the Christians who ever came to worship in Christ's holy places; remember those coming now.¹

Remember, Lord, all Christians who are travelling, whether by sea or by land, and those who are in foreign countries; remember those of our fathers and brethren who are in irons, under arrest, in captivity, in the mines, under torture or beset by the bitterness of slavery. Let every one of them return home peacefully.

Remember, Lord, the old and the feeble, the sick, the weary and those troubled by evil spirits. May they speedily obtain healing and relief from you, O God.

Remember, Lord, all Christian souls exhausted by suffering and in need, O God, of your mercy and help; remember to convert the erring.

Remember, Lord, those of our venerable fathers and brethren who keep their virginity and lead a life of devotion and asceticism, and those who carry on the contest on mountain-sides, in rock-fastnesses and in caverns under the earth. Remember all orthodox communities wherever they may be, remember the Christian community here.

Remember, Lord, those of our fathers and brethren who wear themselves out with serving us for the honour of your holy name.

Remember, Lord, to promote the welfare of all men; have mercy, Lord, on us all, stay with us all, give peace to all your people, destroy scandals, abolish wars, put an end to the schisms that divide the churches, crush heresies as soon as they arise, curb the arrogance of the nations, increase the strength of the Christian body and grant us your peace and your love, O God, our Saviour, Hope of men in every corner of the world.

Remember, Lord, to see that the weather is temperate, the rains moderate, the dew gently falling, fruit plentiful, the season a good one for the crops and the year crowned by your bounty; for to you all creatures raise their eyes in hope and you it is who give them their food at the proper time: you open your hand and fill all that lives with your blessing.

Here he turns to the archdeacon.

Remember, Lord, those who have borne fruit in your holy churches and those who, still doing so, see to the needs of the poor; remember those who have bidden us call them to mind in our prayers.

Remember, Lord, those who have brought the offerings today to your

¹ This petition is found in two MSS. only.

holy altar, those for whose benefit they have given them and those whom they have in their thoughts; remember those who now acknowledge you.

He thinks of such of the living as he will.

Remember, Lord, our parents, friends, kinsfolk and brethren, N.N.

Remember, Lord, all whom we have mentioned and those of the faithful whom we have not mentioned. Instead of what is earthly give them what is heavenly, instead of the corruptible the incorruptible, instead of the temporal the eternal, as your Christ promised us, for you have power of life and death.

After the Communion (29)

The clergy:

305 FILL me, Lord with the spirit of praise, fill me with joy, that my mouth, my lips, may sing of your glory.

The priest says the following prayer:

We give you thanks, O Saviour, God of all men, for all the blessings you have bestowed on us, and especially for allowing us to share in your pure and holy mysteries. We pray you hide us under the shadow of your wings and enable us to partake of these means of holiness until we die, that our souls and bodies may be sanctified thereby and the kingdom of heaven assigned to us as our inheritance; for you are the Source of our holiness, and to you we give glory and thanks, O Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

The archdeacon then says:

We thank you, O Christ, our God, for enabling us to receive your body and blood, which bring forgiveness of sin and the gift of eternal life. Grant, we pray, that we may never deserve damnation, O kind and loving Christ.

DERIVATIVES OF THE SYRIAN TYPE:

THE BYZANTINE LITURGIES

In the fourth century, Asia Minor came under the influence of Antioch. In some of the capital cities, especially Caesarea in Cappadocia, liturgical development took a turn of its own. Basil borrowed the Liturgy of St. James from Antioch and revised it; in particular he recast and shortened the anaphora (between 364 and 379). Although the 'Liturgy of St. Basil' was in constant use at first, it is now used only on the Sundays in

Lent and on Holy Thursday, Holy Saturday, the eves of Christmas and the Epiphany and the first of January (the feast of St. Basil).

Antioch and Caesarea provided Constantinople with bishops, and these—Gregory of Nazianzus, Nectarius and John Chrysostom—brought with them the Cappadocian liturgy composed by St. Basil. From Constantinople it spread throughout the Byzantine world, until it was supplanted in its turn by the perceptibly shorter version known as the Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom, which dates from the end of the fourth century. The Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom is still the commonest liturgy in the East today.¹

The Anaphora of St. Basil

306 IT is right and proper and a fitting tribute to your majesty that we should give you thanks and glory, O God in very truth, and with pure hearts and humble minds offer you this sacrifice of praise, for you have given us knowledge of your truth.

Who can adequately tell the extent of your power, or sound your praises, or describe your wonders? Sovereign Ruler of all that is, Lord of heaven and earth and of all other creatures, visible and invisible: you sit on your glorious throne and look down into the depths; you are eternal and invisible, O Father of our Lord Jesus Christ; and he is the Image of your glory, the Seal that presents a faithful copy of your own nature, O Father; the living Word, truly God,² eternal Wisdom, Life, Source of holiness and Power.

He is the true Light, and through him has been revealed the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of truth, the Spirit of adoption, earnest of the inheritance that is to come and foretaste of the blessings of eternity. He is the Power that gives life, the Fount whence holiness flows; and in the strength that comes from him, every creature endowed with mind and spirit sings your praises and continually gives you glory.

All your servants prostrate themselves before you: the angels, arch-angels, thrones, dominations, principalities, virtues and powers. The cherubim with their many eyes stand round you, the six-winged seraphim too, hiding their faces with two of their wings, hiding their feet with two more, with the other two flying. They cry out to one another, never resting their voices, never sinking into silence as they proclaim your glory and say:

Holy, holy, holy is the God of hosts. Heaven and earth are full of your

¹ In addition, the Syrian type includes a Liturgy of the Presanctified, for use on days when mass is not said. Cf. Good Friday in the Latin rite.

² The evident stress here laid on the divinity of Christ was prompted by the Christological controversies.

glory. Hosannah in high heaven. Blessed is he that comes in the name of the Lord. Hosannah in high heaven.

The priest continues:

Holy, holy, holy you are indeed, O Lord our God; no limit can be set to the splendour of your holiness; wise and judicious are all your ordinances.

You fashioned man from the dust of the earth, did him the honour of making him in your own image, set him in a delightful garden and promised that if he did what you told him, he should live for ever and enjoy the blessings of eternity. But he disobeyed your orders, true God though you were and his Creator; he was led astray by the cunning of the serpent and, becoming the victim of his own sins, was made subject to death. By a just decree of yours, O God, he was driven out of paradise into this world and returned to the earth from which he had been taken.

But you provided a means of salvation for him: it would be possible for him to be born again through your Christ. You were too kind to cast off for ever the creature you had made; you promoted his welfare in many different ways, so great was your mercy. You sent him prophets; you worked miracles through the saints, who generation after generation gave you pleasure; you gave the law for our assistance; you set angels over us to guard us.

When the appointed time came, you spoke to us through your only Son, through whom you had created this temporal world. He is the radiance of your splendour and the full expression of your being; he upholds all things by his powerful word; he thought it no usurpation to claim equality with God, for he was God himself from all eternity. Yet he appeared on earth and lived among men; he took flesh of Mary, the virgin, accepted the lot of a slave and assumed the body that is the sign of our humble condition, as a prelude to assuming us into his own glorious body.

Since through man sin came into the world and through sin death, your only Son, who was in your bosom throughout eternity, yet was born of a woman, was pleased to condemn sin in flesh of his own: they that died because of Adam were to receive life because of Christ. He lived in this world as a citizen of it and told us what to do to obtain salvation; he put us where the errors of idolatry could not reach us and he taught us to know you, the true God; so that he acquired in us a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a consecrated nation.

He cleansed us with water and sanctified us with the Holy Spirit; he gave himself to ransom us from death, whose prisoners we were—for we had been sold, because we had sinned. From the cross he went down into hell,

bent on giving fulfilment himself to every single thing. On the third day he rose again, opening the way for all flesh to follow him (for it could not be that the Source of life should fall a prey to corruption); he became the first-fruits of them that had fallen asleep, the first-born of the dead: in every way he was to have the primacy. He went up to heaven and took his seat at your Majesty's right hand, in the highest place; and he will come back and give us all the reward our conduct deserves.¹ He left us these reminders of his saving passion which we have set before you.

As he was going, of his own accord, to that ever memorable death which brought us life, on the night when he gave himself up that the world might live, he took bread in his hands, those pure and holy hands, and offering it to you, O Father, gave thanks, blessed, consecrated and broke it, and gave it to his holy disciples and apostles, saying:

Take it and eat it: this is my body, broken for you, to remit your sins.

In the same way, he took the chalice with the fruit of the vine; he diluted it, gave thanks, blessed and consecrated it, and gave it to his holy disciples and apostles, saying:

Drink some of it, all of you: this is my blood, shed for you and for the multitudes, to remit your sins. Do this in memory of me. Every time you eat this bread and drink this cup, you will be proclaiming my death and confessing my resurrection.

We too, then, Lord, call to mind his saving sufferings and his life-giving cross, the three days he spent in the tomb, his resurrection from the dead, his going up to heaven, where he sits at your right hand, O Father, and the second visit he has yet to make us, an occasion of glory and fear. And of all the things that are yours we offer you these, which are yours especially.

The people:

For all your blessings, for every one, we sing your praises, bless you, thank you and offer you our prayers, O God.

The priest:

Therefore we too, all-holy Lord—whom you have enabled to serve at your holy altar, not for any virtue of ours (for never in our lives have we done any good) but because your mercy and compassion are so great—we too make bold to approach your altar and offer you the sacrament of the holy body and blood of your Christ.

We beg and beseech you, Holiest of all the holy, in your kindness and

¹ Note the insertion of an explicit confession of faith in the anaphora.

benevolence send your Holy Spirit upon us and upon these gifts, to bless and sanctify them. May he make this bread the precious body of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ —

The deacon:

Amen.

The priest:

—and this chalice the precious blood of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ,

The deacon:

Amen.

The priest:

—shed that the world may have life.

The deacon:

Amen.

The priest:

May all of us that share the one bread and the one chalice be united with one another and have fellowship in the one Holy Spirit. May the reception of the holy body and blood of your Christ bring judgement and condemnation to none of us. May we find mercy and grace with all the saints who have ever given you pleasure since the beginning of time.

Then comes the Great Intercession.

And grant that with one voice and heart we may praise and glorify your name in the fulness of its holiness and splendour, O Father, Son and Holy Spirit, now and for ever, age after age. Amen.

The Anaphora of St. John Chrysostom

- 307 It is right and proper that we should give you praise and thanks and worship wherever your power is felt, *for no word can express you, O God, no mind understand you, no eye behold you, no intelligence grasp you—you who have existed from all eternity and have always been the same:*¹ you and your only Son and your Holy Spirit. You it was that drew us out of nothingness into existence, and when we fell, raised us up again; you spared no effort until

¹ The passages in italics are later additions.

you had brought us to heaven and bestowed upon us the kingdom that is to come.

We thank you for all these blessings—you and your only Son and your Holy Spirit; we thank you, too, for all the other blessings you have given us, *those we are aware of and those of which we know nothing, those that we see and those that we cannot see. We thank you for this offering, which you have consented to accept at our hands, O God round whom the archangels throng in their thousands and the angels in their tens of thousands, the cherubim also and the seraphim, each with his six wings and his many eyes, each borne aloft and flying, each one chanting the hymn of triumph. Loud and full it echoes as they say:*

The people:

Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts. Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosannah in high heaven. Blessed is he that comes in the name of the Lord. Hosannah in high heaven.

The priest:

With these blessed powers we too cry out to you, Lord, for we know how you love men. Holy you are, we say, all-holy: you and your only Son and your Holy Spirit. Holy you are, and splendid indeed is your glory. Such was your love for the world that you gave up your only Son; no one who believed in him was to perish: they were all to have eternal life.

So, then, he came; and when he had done all that he was meant to do for us, on the night when he was given up—or rather, when he gave himself up—he took bread in his holy hands, gave thanks, blessed it, broke it and gave it to his disciples and apostles, saying:

Take it and eat it: this is my body, broken for you, to remit your sins.

When the meal was over, he did the same with the chalice, saying:

Drink some of it, all of you: this is my blood, the blood of the new testament, shed for you and for the multitudes, to remit your sins.

Calling, then, to mind, the holy rite he told us to perform and all that has been done for us; remembering the cross, the burial, the resurrection on the third day, Christ's going up to heaven, where he sits, Father, at your right hand, and the second visit he will come again in his glory to make us: of all the things that are yours we offer you these, which are yours especially; gladly we offer them to you.

The people:

We sing your praises, bless you, thank you and offer you our prayers, O God.

The priest:

We offer you, too, this spiritual sacrifice, which requires no shedding of blood. We beg and beseech you, we implore you, send down your holy Spirit upon us and upon these gifts; make this bread the precious body of your Christ (send your Holy Spirit to change it) and make what is in this chalice your Christ's precious blood (send your Holy Spirit to change that too). To those who receive them may these gifts bring spiritual purity, forgiveness of sins, the bestowal of the Holy Spirit, full possession of the kingdom of heaven and a confident approach to you; may they not lead to judgement and condemnation.

We offer you¹ this spiritual sacrifice also for those of our ancestors and fathers who had the faith and are now at rest; in memory of the patriarchs, prophets, apostles, preachers, evangelists, martyrs and confessors and those who lived continently; and for the spirits of all the just who died in possession of the faith.

Especially do we offer it in honour of our lady Mary, the all-holy, unspotted, more than blessed, glorious, mother of God and ever virgin.

At this point the diptychs containing the names of the dead are read.

We offer the sacrifice in honour of Saint John, the prophet, forerunner and baptist; of the holy apostles, glorious and illustrious; of Saint N., whose feast we are celebrating; and of all your other saints. May their prayers prevail upon you to regard us with favour. Remember, too, all who have fallen asleep confident of rising again and living for all eternity; give them rest where the light shines from your face.

Again we pray you, remember, Lord, all the orthodox bishops who faithfully teach your word, the true word; remember all their priests, the deacons serving Christ, and every other degree of the hierarchy.

Again, we offer you this spiritual sacrifice for the whole world, for the holy catholic and apostolic Church, for those whose lives are dignified by chastity, for our eminently faithful and Christ-loving kings, and for all their household and army. Grant them a peaceful reign, O Lord, that sharing in their tranquillity we too may live calm and tranquil lives, with devotion and dignity.

Here the diptychs with the names of the living are read.

Remember, Lord, the city where we live, and every other city and district; remember those dwelling in them according to the orthodox faith.

¹ The following passage has no parallel in the Syriac.

Remember, Lord, those who are travelling, whether by land or by sea; remember the sick, the suffering and those who are held in captivity; remember to grant them all salvation.

Remember, Lord, all who are bearing fruit and doing good works in your holy churches and seeing to the needs of the poor; and send down your mercy on us all.

And grant that with one voice and heart we may praise and glorify your name in the fulness of its holiness and splendour, O Father, Son and Holy Spirit, now and for ever, age after age. Amen.

THE SYRIAC ANAPHORA OF THE TWELVE APOSTLES

The first Anaphora of the Twelve Apostles, which depends on the Byzantine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom, is known to us through a Syriac version and a Maronite one. It is very old. Dom Engberding, who has made a thorough study of it, ascribes it to the fourth century.

308 YOU it was, holy and merciful God, who through your only Son, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, instituted for us this holy feast of the spirit. Look kindly on this sacrifice that requires no shedding of blood; accept this offering. Bestow upon us, Lord, the gift of your Holy Spirit and enable us to approach your holy of holies with clean hearts and good consciences.

Grant us the peace which your only Son gave to his holy disciples, that we too may diffuse peace as we greet one another with a holy kiss and so may glorify your invincible goodness and your only Son and your Holy Spirit, now and for ever, age after age.

The people:

Amen.

The celebrant:

Peace be with you all.

The people:

May your spirit too be at peace.

The deacon:

Let us give one another the kiss of peace.

The people:

Enable us to do so, Lord.

The deacon:

Let us bow our heads in the Lord's presence.

The people:

In your presence, Lord, we bow them.

The celebrant:

May your peace and tranquillity, Lord, your love, your grace and your divine mercy be with and among us as long as we live, now and for ever, age after age.

The people:

Amen.

The celebrant:

King of kings, Lord of lords, we fall on our knees before you. We beg you, Lord, stretch out your merciful hand over these your servants, bowed before your terrible grandeur and majesty. Bless and protect, cleanse and sanctify the sheep of the flock you redeemed with your own pure blood; give a special lustre to that formidable sign on their foreheads, that the Enemy may know them for sheep of your flock, sheep of your own redeeming, now and always, age after age.

The deacon:

Let us stand with proper reverence.

The people:

Mercy. Peace.

The celebrant:

The love of God the Father and the grace of the Only Begotten be with you all, and may the Holy Spirit be imparted to you.

The people:

Be it so with you too.

The celebrant:

Let us set our minds on the things above.

The people:

They are fixed on the Lord.

The celebrant:

Let us give thanks to the Lord.

The people:

It is right and proper that we should.

The celebrant:

It is indeed right and proper that we should give you worship and praise, you the true God, and your only Son and the Holy Spirit. You it was that drew us out of nothingness into existence, and when we fell, raised us up again; you spared no effort until you had brought us to heaven and bestowed upon us the kingdom that is to come. For all these blessings we give you thanks—you and your only Son and the Holy Spirit.

Before you and about you throng the four-faced cherubim, the six-winged seraphim too. Never sinking into silence, never resting their voices they praise your majesty; with all the other powers in heaven they give you glory. Loud the sound of their song as they say:

The people:

Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts. Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosannah in high heaven. Blessed is he that comes and will come again in the name of the Lord our God. Hosannah in high heaven.

The celebrant:

Holy you are, all-holy, you and your only Son and your Holy Spirit. Holy you are, all-holy, and splendid indeed is your glory. Such was your love for the world that you gave up your only Son; no one who believed in him was to perish: they were all to have eternal life.

So, then, he came; and when he had done all that he was meant to do for us, on the night when he was betrayed he took bread in his holy hands, raised his hands to heaven, blessed the bread, sanctified it, broke it and gave it to his apostles saying:

Take it and eat some, all of you: this is my body, broken for you and for the multitudes, given to remit your sins and bring you eternal life.

In the same way, when they had finished supper he took a cup and mixed wine and water in it. He gave thanks, blessed and sanctified the cup, tasted it and gave it to his disciples and apostles, saying:

Take it and drink some, all of you: this is the blood of the new testament, shed for you and for the multitudes, given to remit your sins and bring you eternal life.

Do this in memory of me. Every time you eat this bread and drink this cup, you will be proclaiming my death and confessing my resurrection, until I return.

The people:

Your death, Lord. . . .

The celebrant:

We call, then, Lord, to mind the holy rite you told us to perform and all that you did for us. Remembering your cross, your resurrection from the dead on the third day, your going up to heaven, where you sit at the right hand of the Father in his majesty; remembering the second visit you have yet to make us, when you will come in glory to judge the living and the dead and give us all, in your kindness, what our conduct deserves; remembering this, your flock makes its petitions to you.¹ Through you and with you it begs a hearing from your Father and says: Have mercy on me.

The people:

Have mercy on us.

The celebrant:

For all these blessings, for every one, we too, Lord, thank you and praise you.

The people:

We sing your praises. . . .

The deacon:

In silence and awe.

The celebrant:

Falling on our faces before you, we beg you, all-powerful Lord, God of the holy virtues, to send down your holy Spirit on these gifts lying before us

and to show that this bread is the venerable body of our Lord Jesus Christ

and this chalice the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ.

To all who receive them may they bring life and resurrection, remission

¹ It is exceptional for an anaphora to be addressed to Christ.

of sins, health of soul and body, mental light, and confidence when they stand before the dread tribunal of your Christ. May none of your people perish, Lord. Rather, in your mercy and kindness, enable us to serve you and minister to you untroubled throughout our lives and to enjoy your heavenly mysteries, the life-giving, the immortal, now and for ever, age after age.

The people:

Amen.

The celebrant, bowing down:

We offer you this spiritual sacrifice, all-powerful Lord, for all men, for the whole of your Church, for the bishops who faithfully teach the true word in it, for my unworthy self and for the priests, deacons and orthodox Christians of the entire region, for all your faithful people, for the safety of your flock, for this holy Church, for every city and region where the faithful are established, for good weather and good harvests, for those of our brethren in the faith who are in want, for those who gave these offerings and for all who are usually named in your holy churches. Give them all the help they need.

We offer the sacrifice for our fathers and brethren in the true faith who are now dead. Cover them on the day of judgement with your divine glory. Do not call them to account, for no man living is innocent in your sight.

Of all ever seen on this earth one alone was sinless—your only Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the great means of atonement for our race. Through him it is that we hope to find mercy and forgiveness of sin, for ourselves and for them.

The people:

Pardon us, forgive us.

The celebrant:

May we continually commemorate holy Mary, mother of God yet ever virgin, the holy apostles, the holy prophets, the martyrs, resplendent from their victory, and all the saints who have ever given you pleasure. May we be kept from harm by their prayers and supplications and receive mercy in this world and the next, so that for this, as for everything, your blessed name and the names of Jesus Christ and your holy Spirit may receive great glory.

The people:

As they always have and always will, age after age.

The celebrant:

Peace be with you all.

The people:

May your spirit too be at peace.

The celebrant:

May the mercy of God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.

The people:

May it be with you too.

The celebrant:

To you, the living God, the good Lord, we commend ourselves and our fellow men, confident that we can attain eternal life through Christ. We beg and beseech you, Lord, in your great mercy to look upon us and upon your faithful people standing before you. Enable us to give you the praise of clean consciences, holy Father, when we call upon you; enable us to say when we pray:

The people:

Our Father, who art in heaven. . . .

The celebrant:

Lead us not indeed, Lord, into temptation, but deliver us from evil and from all that savours of evil, for yours are kingship, power and glory, yours and your only Son's and your Holy Spirit's.

The celebrant:

Peace be with you all.

The people:

May your spirit too be at peace.

The deacon:

Let us bow our heads in the Lord's presence.

The people:

In your presence, Lord, we bow them.

The celebrant:

To those who bow their souls and bodies before your love for men, give blessing and sanctification. Make them perfect, spotless, guiltless; make them please you all the days of their lives. May they and we alike give glory to you and your only Son and your Holy Spirit, now and for ever, age after age.

The celebrant:

Peace be with you all.

The people:

May your spirit too be at peace.

The deacon:

In fear and trembling. . . .

The celebrant:

Holy things are for the holy.

The people:

The Father alone is holy.

The deacon:

Now that we have received the holy mysteries. . . .

The people:

We give you thanks.

The celebrant:

We give you thanks, O God, Lord of the holy virtues, for enabling us, in spite of our unworthiness, to receive these heavenly, eternal mysteries, the life-giving body and the saving blood of your Christ. Keep us always in a fit state to receive them; let us approach them devoutly, with clear consciences, every day of our lives. Confirm us in our determination to do what pleases you; and may we always give glory to you and your only Son and the Holy Spirit, now and for ever, age after age.

The people:

Amen.

The celebrant:

Peace be with you all.

The people:

May your spirit too be at peace.

The deacon:

Let us bow our heads in the Lord's presence.

The people:

In your presence, Lord, we bow them.

The celebrant:

Before you, O God, we bow, as in your pity for us and your great goodness and kindness you yourself stooped towards us. For our sakes you humbled yourself and gave us this means of sharing in your holy mysteries and their gift of life. Protect your worshippers; stretch out your irresistible hand and put your mark, your sign upon them. Keep us unswervingly true to the holy mysteries we have received and grant that we may never turn to anything that sullies our bodies or our souls. May our strength be in you, and may we always give glory to you and your Father and your Holy Spirit.

THE ALEXANDRIAN TYPE: THE LITURGY OF ST. MARK

The Liturgy of St. Mark, which was used in Egypt and Abyssinia, is contemporary with the Liturgy of St. James and differs from it only in detail; in particular, the prayer of intercession comes at the beginning of the anaphora instead of at the end. Unfortunately, we have no critical edition of this rite. The only trustworthy sources are the Dêr-Balyzeh papyrus and the Strasbourg fragment edited by Andrieu and Collomp.

Thanks to a recent discovery by C. H. Roberts, we now have a better text of the Dêr-Balyzeh papyrus. The papyrus dates from the end of the sixth century but, according to Doni Capelle, incorporates elements of great antiquity. Comparison with Serapion's anaphora shows that the Liturgy of St. Mark is related to this ancient text.

Fragment of the Anaphora from the Dêr-Balyzeh Papyrus

The preface and the greater part of the intercession are missing.

309 . . . them that hate you. May your blessing be upon the nation that does your will. Lift up the fallen, convert the erring, comfort the faint-hearted.¹

For you are high above all princedoms, powers, virtues and dominations; above everything that can be named, both in this world and in the world to come.

Thousands of angels and numberless armies of archangels stand round about you; the many-eyed cherubim surround you, the six-winged seraphim too, hiding their faces with two of their wings, hiding their feet with two more, with the other two flying. Unceasingly they all cry out in praise of your holiness. Accept our acclamation when we too say with them:

Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts. Heaven and earth are full of your glory.

Fill us too with your glory, and of your kindness send down your Holy Spirit² on these creatures: make the bread the body of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and the chalice the blood of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, the blood of our God, the blood of his new testament.

The ingredients of this bread,³ once scattered over mountains, hills and valleys, were mixed together and made one body. . . . This wine, pressed out from David's holy vine, and the water that came forth from the spotless Lamb, were mixed together and made one mystery. So may it be with the catholic Church of Jesus Christ—so may you gather its elements together.

For on the night when our Lord Jesus Christ gave himself up, he took bread in his holy hands, blessed and sanctified it, broke it and gave it to his disciples and apostles, saying:

Take some and eat it, all of you: this is my body, given for you, to remit your sins.

In the same way, after the meal he took a cup, blessed it, drank from it and said:

Take it and drink some, all of you: this is my blood, shed for you, to remit your sins.

Every time you eat this bread and drink this cup, you will be proclaiming my death and calling me to mind.

¹ The text here is obviously based on the prayer of St. Clement of Rome.

² In this case, the epiclesis comes before the narrative of the institution.

³ A variant of the Didache; cf. the anaphora of Serapion, no. 191 above.

The people:

We proclaim your death, we confess your resurrection. And we pray . . . [*gap of at least sixteen lines*] . . . grant us your servants the power of the Holy Spirit, to increase and strengthen our faith and our trust in the life to come, through our Lord Jesus Christ. His the glory, yours too, O Father, and the Holy Spirit's, throughout all ages. Amen.

The Andrien-Collomp Papyrus

The beginning of the anaphora is missing.

310 . . . sing your praises day and night, for you it is that made the heavens and all that is in them, the earth and all it contains, the sea and the rivers and all the creatures that live in them.

Man you made like yourself, made as an image of yourself. All that is you set in order wisely, using the true light, the light that shines from your Son, our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

For this we give thanks to you, to him and to the Holy Spirit, and we offer you this spiritual sacrifice, which calls for no shedding of blood; we offer it with all the nations, from east to west and from north to south, for your name is known to them all. Everywhere incense is offered to your name, pure offerings, oblation and sacrifice.

We beg and beseech you, remember the holy Catholic Church, the one and only; remember every nation, every flock.

Grant that every heart may know the peace that comes from heaven; grant us the blessing of peace throughout our lives.

Remember the king of this land: may his purposes be peaceful, for our sakes and for the honour of your holy name.

5

The Western Liturgies

If it is easy to trace the rise of the various Eastern rites, in spite of their apparent complexity, the same is not true of the West. With the end of persecution, which came under Constantine, we find an extraordinary development of ecclesiastical institutions and liturgical practices both at Rome and in Africa, Gaul and the British Isles; but for want of documentary evidence, we are completely in the dark as to the means by which this transformation was brought about.

Thus, for Rome and for Italy in general, after the evidence provided by St. Justin and the anaphora of Hippolytus, there is no further indication of the order of the prayers at mass until the sixth century. The structure of the mass in the Gelasian Sacramentary is as different from Justin's as it is from the Eastern liturgies. A great upheaval had taken place (how, we cannot tell) even in the canon, which from that time onwards has never been altered again. The litanies and the epiclesis of the Holy Spirit had disappeared, the kiss of peace had been moved to another point in the ceremony.

Roughly speaking, the West was divided between two rites. There was the Roman use, which was followed in parts of Italy and Africa, and the Gallican use, which had its adherents in the north of Italy and in Gaul, Spain, Britain and Ireland. Somewhere between the two was the liturgy of Milan or Ambrosian Rite, which seems to have been derived from both the Roman and the Gallican uses.

The Roman liturgy, which was ultimately to win the day, is known to us from two liturgical books, the Leonine Sacramentary and the Gelasian Sacramentary, which go back to the fifth or sixth century but contain much material that is older in date. Our present liturgy still contains a number of pieces taken from these old Roman books. The selections given below are limited to prefaces.

The Latin liturgy is distinguished from the Eastern rites by its wealth of doctrinal statement, its lapidary, hieratic turn of phrase and the quiet precision and dignity of its style.

THE ROMAN CANON

The treatise 'De Sacramentis', now conclusively assigned to St. Ambrose, contains the central part of the Roman canon as it was at the end of the fourth century. The text is not complete.

From this time onwards, the main outlines of the canon have not varied, although there are many differences between this fragment and the text of the present canon.

To convince yourself that the words of consecration come straight from heaven, see what the words are.

The priest says:

311 GRANT us that this offering may meet with your approval; make it spiritual, make it a gift that you can accept; for it represents the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The day before his passion, he took bread in his holy hands and looked up to heaven, to you, holy Father, almighty, eternal God. Giving thanks, he blessed the bread and broke it; then he gave it, broken, to his apostles and disciples, saying:

Take some of this and eat it, all of you; for this is my body, which will be broken for the multitudes.

In the same way, he took the chalice, too, after the meal on the day before his passion, and looked up to heaven, to you, holy Father, almighty, eternal God. Giving thanks, he blessed the chalice; then he gave it to his apostles and disciples, saying:

Take this and drink some of it, all of you; for this is my blood.

Every time you do this, you will be calling me to mind, until I come back.

The priest continues:

Calling, therefore, to mind his passion in all its glory, his resurrection from the world below and his ascension into heaven, we offer you this victim, unblemished, spiritual, needing no bloodshed—this holy bread, this chalice that gives eternal life. We beg and beseech you to accept this offering at your altar in heaven at the hands of your angels, as in your kindness you accepted presents from your servant, Abel the just, and the sacrifice that our father Abraham made you, and the gift the high-priest, Melchisedech, presented to you.

ROMAN LITANY

Pope Gelasius (†496) prescribed that this prayer should be sung everywhere throughout the Church. It represents the Kyrie in the form it took at Rome at the end of the fifth century. It does not occur in the ordinary of the mass in the Gelasian Sacramentary.

Let us all say:

312 HEAR us, Lord, and have mercy.

With every confidence we call on the Father of the Only-Begotten, the Son of the eternal Father and our Lord the Holy Spirit.

Kyrie eleison.

For the spotless Church of the living God, everywhere throughout the world, we appeal to the God who is rich in goodness.

Kyrie eleison.

For the great God's holy priests, the ministers at the sacred altar, and all the peoples that worship the true God, we offer our prayers to Christ the Lord.

Kyrie eleison.

For those who preach the true word as they ought, we pray with special earnestness to God's Word in his infinite wisdom.

Kyrie eleison.

For all who, keeping themselves chaste in soul and body to obtain the kingdom of heaven, spend themselves in those labours that befit the spiritual, we implore the Giver of spiritual gifts.

Kyrie eleison.

For Christian princes and their armies, loving justice and equity, we beseech the omnipotent God.

Kyrie eleison.

For mild and pleasant weather, for rain at the time it is needed, for healthy and gentle winds and for the seasons to follow one another to our advantage, we entreat the Ruler of the universe.

Kyrie eleison.

To those who have acquired some knowledge of Christianity and some desire for its heavenly grace, we beg the all-powerful God to show his mercy.

Kyrie eleison.

For those beset by the frailty inherent in this weak human nature, by the envy of evil spirits or by any of the world's errors, we ask our Redeemer's mercy.

Kyrie eleison.

For those who are forced to live abroad, those persecuted by men who wield their power unjustly, and those harassed by enemy action, we implore our Lord and Saviour.

Kyrie eleison.

For those deceived by the false teaching of the Jews . . . or the heretics' crooked reasoning and for those sunk in pagan superstition, we make our prayer to the God of truth.

Kyrie eleison.

To those whose religion moves them to labour for him, and to those who out of love for their brethren relieve the wants of the needy, we pray the Lord to show his great mercy.

Kyrie eleison.

For all who ever cross the threshold of this holy house . . . and for those assembled here now from motives of religion and humble devotion, we offer our prayers to the Lord in his glory.

Kyrie eleison.

For the cleansing of our bodies and souls and the forgiveness of all our sins, we entreat the God of boundless compassion.

Kyrie eleison.

For rest for the souls of all the faithful, especially those of the Lord's holy priests who have governed this Catholic Church, we pray the Lord of the spirits and Judge of all flesh.

Kyrie eleison.

Bodies dead to sin and souls alive by faith,

grant us, Lord, grant us.

Holy fear and true love,

grant us, Lord, grant us.

Lives that please you, deaths you can approve of,

grant us, Lord, grant us.

Angels to bring us peace and saints to assist us,

grant us, Lord, grant us.

Ourselves and all that we have we owe to the Lord. He gave them, he increased them, he gives us the means to keep them. To his mercy we commend them, and to the judgement of his providence.

Lord, have mercy.

THE LEONINE SACRAMENTARY

The Leonine Sacramentary is the oldest of the Roman liturgical miscellanies that has come down to us. Many of the expressions used in it are found in St. Leo also; hence the name 'Leonine'.

We do not possess the whole of it. It was made up of separate leaves or libelli, containing the prayers for the various feasts and for special occasions throughout the year. It is difficult to date. Some of the masses seem highly archaic in character, while the later ones allude to the barbarian invasions and appear to go back to the early sixth century.

Mass for Christmas

Collect

- 313 **WONDERFUL** the dignity you bestowed, O God, on human nature when you created it; more wonderful still its condition when you recreated it. Grant, we pray, that as Jesus Christ, your Son, stooped to share our human nature, so we may share the lot of his divine nature.

Through that same Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord, who with you and the Holy Spirit has shared one life and kingly power, one godhead, from all eternity.

Secret

Grant, we pray you, merciful God, God of unlimited power, Father from all eternity, that the feast of our Lord's nativity—Jesus Christ's—to which these rites are a prelude, may be something new to us. May it not pass away but continue for ever, so that the wonder of it will always be new.

Preface

It is indeed right and proper, it is only fitting and what our duty requires of us, that always and everywhere we should give you thanks, holy Lord, almighty Father, eternal God:

For every object of Christian devotion takes its origin from this feast and is included in the mystery of this offering, which was revealed even to the parents of the human race, as the apostle declared when in speaking of the first human beings he said: This is a great mystery—I am speaking of Christ and the Church.

It was preached by the patriarchs in various of their deeds and utterances, prefigured by the precepts of the law, foretold in the messages the prophets gave. The ancient ceremonies find their completion in it; the present dispensation of heaven's graces was made possible by it; the promise

of blessings to come is confirmed by it—for when we see so clear a fulfilment of prophecy, we may reasonably expect that what we have been promised will come to pass.

Prayers after the Communion

Grant, we pray, O Lord our God, that by living as we ought, we may come to share in the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ, which it is our delight now to commemorate.¹

Grant that we your servants, Lord, we pray, may grow in faith and hope and charity.² May we who rejoice in the birth of our Lord, your Son, be under your governance and suffer no harm from the enmity of the world. May we possess throughout eternity the fruits of the mystery which it is our desire to celebrate in this world of time.

Another Preface for Christmas

- 314 FOR the words he put on to the lips of his prophets have been fulfilled. A virgin did conceive and bear a Son, and we do call him Emmanuel; and God is indeed with us, because the Word made flesh came to dwell among us. As had been foretold, he was born a boy for our sakes, was given to us as a little child; and he became a Prince—the power rests on his shoulders. He will yet be called the Admirable, the Counsellor, the mighty God, the Prince of peace. His dominion will spread and peace will know no limits. He will sit on David's kingly throne and will give it lasting strength.

From all of this we clearly see that he was God and man as well; that taking what was ours, he stooped and gave us what was his.

Filled, therefore, with joy to overflowing, we join with the angels and archangels, the thrones and the lordships, and with the whole of heaven's army we hymn your glory. Ceaselessly they say, and we say with them:

Holy, holy, holy, etc.

Our New Birth at Christmas

- 315 IT is indeed right and proper, it is only fitting and what our duty requires of us, that always and everywhere we should give you thanks, holy Lord, almighty Father, eternal God:

For a marvellous change was wrought in our nature at its restoration. This truth flashed on the world when from the old stock the new Man was

¹ Postcommunion of the midnight mass for Christmas in the present Roman rite.

² This occurs in part in the collect of the mass for the 13th Sunday after Pentecost. The reason why an entire proper is given here is that it conveys some idea of the way the prayers are put together in the Sacramentary for a feast.

born, from mortality came immortality, from human nature the remedy was drawn for human nature's healing, from a race of sinners sprang a Child who was innocent of sin. When your Word took to himself this frail nature of ours, it was honoured with the gift of eternity and we ourselves, sharing its wonderful destiny, were made eternal also.

Through him the angels offer their praise of your majesty, the lordships their veneration, the powers their awe-struck reverence; through him the heavens, the powers in the heavens and the blessed seraphim, exulting together, adore you. Grant, we pray you, that our voices too may gain a hearing with theirs as we humbly confess you and say:

Holy, holy, holy, etc.

Preface for the Ascension

- 316 IT is indeed right and proper, it is only fitting and what our duty requires of us, that always and everywhere we should give you thanks, holy Lord, almighty Father, eternal God:

And we are justified in rejoicing on this joyful feast-day because, when he went up into heaven, the Mediator between God and man, Jesus Christ, did not cast off this poor nature of ours. Though he had entered into the glory which he had always shared with you, he still kept our human nature, that through it he might bring us to share his divinity.

Therefore we join with the angels and archangels, the thrones and the lordships, and with the whole of heaven's army we hymn your glory. Ceaselessly they say, and we say with them:

Holy, holy, holy, etc.

Preface for Pentecost

- 317 IT is indeed right and proper, it is only fitting and what our duty requires of us, that always and everywhere we should give you thanks, holy Lord, almighty Father, eternal God.

May this our confession, glorious Father, be always acceptable to you, coming as it does from the hearts of the children born in fulfilment of your promise. Of all the gifts bestowed on your Church in the early days, none was greater than this: your gospel preached by its adherents in every tongue. So was the sentence revoked that pride had earned by the building of the tower;¹ difference of language is no obstacle now to the building-up of the Church, but rather strengthens the Church's unity, through Christ our Lord.

Through him the angels offer their praise of your majesty, the lordships

¹ The tower of Babel.

their veneration, the powers their awe-struck reverence; through him the heavens, the powers in the heavens and the blessed seraphim, exulting together, adore you. Grant, we pray you, that our voices too may gain a hearing with theirs as we humbly confess you and say:

Holy, holy, holy, etc.

Preface for the Martyrs John and Paul

- 318 IT is indeed right and proper, it is only fitting and what our duty requires of us, that always and everywhere we should give you thanks, holy Lord, almighty Father, eternal God:

For those loving words of our Lord Jesus Christ's ring out, those merciful words of prophecy uttered to help the world: 'A grain of wheat must fall into the ground and die, or else it remains nothing more than a grain of wheat; but if it dies, then it yields rich fruit.'

Since then, we have seen a fruitful crop spring up in every corner of the world. The seed sown on the cross has produced a glorious harvest of martyrs; for the sight of the Creator, shedding his blood for his ungrateful slaves, has made his servants eager, in spite of their sins, to give their own lives for their spotless Lord.

Therefore we join with the angels and archangels, the thrones and the lordships, and with the whole of heaven's army we hymn your glory. Ceaselessly they say, and we say with them:

Holy, holy, holy, etc.

A Song of the Church

- 319 FOR our weakness gives you continual scope for displaying your strength. You have given your Church the power to grow in spite of opposition: whenever men think they have crushed her, she stands up again, stronger than ever; for persecution puts her faith to the test, and when with your help she emerges victorious, it leaves her covered with glory, even in this life; through Christ our Lord.

Through him, etc.

Preface for July

- 320 THIS is the providential law you have made for us: that the effect of what comes to us from without should depend on what we are like within.

No external misfortune will get the better of us if we bridle the vices within us.

No public disgrace will be too much for us if we withstand our own disgraceful desires.

No outward disturbance will daunt us if our intentions are pure.
 No enemy will rob us of resilience if we have peace of heart.
 No one can do us more harm than we can do to ourselves; and as soon
 as we master ourselves, everything else loses its power to hurt us.

The Harvest Fast

- 321 IT is indeed right and proper, it is only fitting and what our duty requires of us, that always and everywhere we should give you thanks, holy Lord, almighty Father, eternal God:

For it is your will that our thanksgiving for the fruits of the earth now gathered in should take the form of fasting. From this devotion we are to learn that these gifts were given us not to feed on to excess but to supply the wants of our frail bodies; and a sparing use of them will leave something to feed the needy.

This wholesome penance will restrain the arrogance to which our mortal nature is prone, and our pity for the poor will reflect your own kindness. Using these temporal blessings thus, we shall learn to long for the blessings of eternity; through Christ our Lord.

Through him, etc.

THE GELASIAN SACRAMENTARY

The Gelasian Sacramentary may be regarded as the oldest official book of the Roman liturgy. It was in use in Italy, Gaul and England. Though Roman in content, it contains additions and alterations from Gallican sources. The most reliable liturgists attribute the main part of it to Pope Gelasius. Its theological teaching makes it of the highest interest from the dogmatic point of view.

Preface for the Octave of Christmas

- 322 IT is indeed right and proper, it is only fitting and what our duty requires of us, that always and everywhere we should give you thanks, holy Lord, almighty Father, eternal God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

As we celebrate today the octave of his birth, we revere the marvels you wrought, Lord, when he was born: for she that gave him birth was a virgin mother, and he that was born of her was a child God.

No wonder was it that the heavens gave tongue, the angels rejoiced, the Magi underwent a transformation, kings were seized with anxiety, and tiny children were crowned with the glory of martyrdom. He was our Food, yet his mother fed him; he was the Bread that came from heaven, yet he was laid in a manger like fodder, for the animals to eat devoutly.

There did the ox recognise its Owner and the ass its Master's crib: there

did the people of the circumcision acknowledge him, there did the Gentiles acclaim him. This figure too did our Lord fulfil to the utmost, when of his kindness he was taken in Simeon's arms in the temple.

Therefore we join with the angels and archangels, the thrones and the lordships, and with the whole of heaven's army we hymn your glory. Ceaselessly they say, and we say with them:

Holy, holy, holy, etc.

Easter Preface

323 IT is indeed right and proper, it is only fitting and what our duty requires of us, that always and everywhere we should give you thanks, holy Lord, almighty Father, eternal God:

For the time we have so longed for has come; the night of our desires is here, and the light shines in it. What greater, what better occupation could we find than to declare the power the Lord showed in his rising? This was the night when he shattered the gates of hell, took up for us the shining banner of his resurrection and, restoring man, exiled through the Enemy's spite, set him among the astonished stars.

A mystery indeed the exchange that took place this night; and how it deserves our reverence! Eternal the affection that bestowed these blessings on holy mother Church. He did not wish for something to destroy; his desire was for something to save.

When Mary gave birth to the Most Holy, she was beside herself with joy. The Church is beside herself with joy at the beauty of the children she has brought forth. The blessed stream that flowed from the Lord's side has washed away the whole mass of their sins, and now that they are born again, born to eternal life, they can receive at this holy altar the Food that is living.

Therefore we join with the angels and archangels, the thrones and the lordships, and with the whole of heaven's army we hymn your glory. Ceaselessly they say, and we say with them:

Holy, holy, holy, etc.

AMBROSIAN PREFACES

In Duchesne's opinion, the various non-Roman liturgies of the West form a closely related group, differing sharply from the Roman liturgy and having their centre and cradle at Milan. More recent liturgists have considered Rome as the source of all the Latin liturgies, including the Ambrosian.

According to their latest editor, the Ambrosian prefaces given below belong to the middle of the fifth century. They may have been composed by Bishop Eusebius (who died in 462) as the traditions of the Church of Milan would suggest.

Preface for the Epiphany

- 324 FROM the heavens over Jordan's bed the thunder rolled, telling us that you were there; it showed us the Saviour, who had come to us from heaven; it showed us you, the Father of the eternal Light.

You opened the heavens, blessed the air and cleansed the waters, and through the Holy Spirit, who appeared like a dove, you showed us your only Son.

This was the day when the waters received your blessing and took away the curse that had been laid on us. Now they can wash all sins away, if only men will believe; now they can make new children for God, adopting them to eternal life. Our birth in the flesh destined us to a life in time, our sin made us the prisoners of death; but now eternal life is open to us and we are called back to glory in the kingdom of heaven.

Lenten Preface

- 325 IT is indeed right and proper, it is only fitting and what our duty requires of us, that always and everywhere we should give you thanks, holy Lord, almighty Father, eternal God, through Christ our Lord:

For it is through him that when we fast, our faith finds nourishment, our hope receives increase, our charity grows in strength.

He is the true and living Bread, the Substance of eternity, the Food on which virtue thrives.

Yes, that Word of yours, through whom all that is was made, is given to men to be Food for their souls; he is given to the angels, too, to be their Bread.

This Bread it was that enabled Moses, your servant, to fast for forty days and nights when he received the law, to abstain from bodily food the better to savour your excellence.

Under this influence, he felt no hunger in his body and he gave no thought to earthly food, for the sight of your glory made him radiant and he was fed by the Spirit with the Word of God.

Give us always this Bread, which you bid us always to hunger for; give us Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Through him, etc.

Preface for the Second Sunday of Lent

- 326 THROUGH Christ, our Lord.

To show us how he had humbled himself, to let us see the mystery of it, he sat down, wearied, by a well. Of the Samaritan woman, whom he had prepared for the gift of faith, he asked for water to drink. What in his

love he was thirsting for was that she should believe in him; and while he asked her for water, he was kindling fire in her heart, a fire of love for God.

Therefore we implore your boundless mercy that turning from the dark depths of vice and shunning the flow of injurious passion, we may always thirst for you, the Fountain of life and Source of goodness. And may we please you by our way of fasting.

Through the same Christ, our Lord, etc.

Preface for the Third Sunday of Lent

327 YOU are the kindest, Lord, of Fathers. All that long time ago you proclaimed that your divine Son, the Christ, would come to us as one of Abraham's descendants.

And now we have what once you promised our fathers. You promised holy Abraham that a nation should emerge from the Gentiles; and now in truth men of every nation, tribe and tongue are being formed into one people by the Christian religion.

Faithless, obstinate, unjust, the Jewish race will not acknowledge its heavenly Father, though all its glory comes from his Son.

Ungrateful for repeated correction, it rejected its Lord when he came, and it cannot grasp him now that he has gone.

As for us, we rejoice exceedingly, for we have received in their stead the kingdom meant for the Jews; through Christ, our Lord.

Easter Preface

328 It is only fitting and what our duty requires of us that we should give you thanks, holy God of all power, and devoutly praise you, glorious Father, Author and Creator of the universe:

For though Jesus Christ, your Son, was God in all majesty, to deliver the human race he willingly submitted to death on the cross.

How this should be, Abraham showed long before by his treatment of his son, and the people Moses led enacted it in figure when they sacrificed the lamb with no blemish on it. The prophet's sacred trumpet sounded to proclaim that Christ would bear the sins of us all and obtain forgiveness for our offences.

Now that the paschal feast has been ennobled by the blood of Christ, the joy the faithful have in it knows no bounds.

It is a mystery full of grace, a mystery beyond all telling, a sign of God's generosity. Of all solemnities, this is the one to honour most, for on this day he went to his death; to redeem his servants he died at the hands of mortals.

Blessed the death that undid the knots which death had tied. Now may hell's ruler know himself mastered, now may we rejoice: no longer need we fall into the abyss; our feet are set on the road to heaven.

Therefore we join with the angels and the archangels, the thrones and the lordships, and with the whole of heaven's army we hymn your glory. Ceaselessly they say, and we say with them:

Holy, holy, holy, etc.

Preface for Pentecost

- 329 ON this great festival we rejoice because the paschal feast, the feast of feasts, receives its completion from the mystery of the fifty days; the mystical number is achieved. The languages, long ago diversified by pride, to men's confusion, are now by the Holy Spirit restored to their original unity.

For today the apostles, hearing the sudden noise in the heavens, received the symbol of the one faith, and in the diverse tongues preached the glory of your gospel to all the nations; through Christ, our Lord.

For the Consecration of the Cathedral

- 330 IT is indeed right and proper, it is only fitting and what our duty requires of us, that always and everywhere we should give you thanks, holy Lord, almighty Father, eternal God, through Christ our Lord.

The eminent power he had received he gave to the Church, and as he had obtained such honour himself, he made her his queen and bride. He gave her sovereign sway and subjected the whole world to her; from heaven came his command that all should acknowledge her jurisdiction. She is the mother of all men living; the number of her children adds to her distinction.

Day by day she bears God children through the power of the Holy Spirit. Like a great vine, she covers the earth with her branches; with the wood of the cross for their support, her shoots climb up to the kingdom of heaven.

She is a city built high up on the crest of a mountain, visible everywhere, a beacon to all travellers; and her Founder and leading Citizen is that same Jesus Christ, our Lord, your Son.

Part Four

EARLY TREATISES ON PRAYER

Treatises on Prayer and Commentaries on the 'Our Father'

Not one of the treatises on prayer produced in the first few centuries is without its commentary on the 'Our Father'; in fact, these commentaries form the main part of the treatises in which they appear. In view of the concision of the Lord's Prayer, that is not surprising: it would be hard to find any other formula as compact. Tertullian, in his treatise on prayer, calls it a summary of the entire gospel.

All that can be attempted here is to choose (and consequently to omit) some of the most typical passages from the ancient treatises on prayer and commentaries on the 'Our Father'. The selection will be drawn from third-century authors writing in Latin and Greek.

From the Apostolic Tradition we may take the oldest surviving accounts of prayer as it was practised by Christians in the first generation or so. Then there is Origen, who opened new vistas for the theology of prayer. His commentary, extracts from which will follow, is more technical and exegetical than the other patristic ones. Cyprian, drawing on Tertullian, produced another commentary, which will be given in full. St. Hilary thought so highly of it that he refused to expound the 'Our Father' himself.

St. Cyril of Alexandria's Mystagogical Catechesis, an explanation of the sacraments to the newly baptised, also contains a paraphrase of the Lord's Prayer. Though short, it is closely packed with meaning.

THE APOSTOLIC TRADITION

The Time to Pray

331 **WHEN** the faithful wake in the morning, the first thing they should all do—men and women alike—is to wash their hands and pray to God. Only then should they go about their business.

If, however, there is to be a sermon, preference ought to be given to that: we ought to be firmly convinced that God speaks through the mouth of the preacher. Having prayed thus, with our brethren in the assembly, we shall be fortified against whatever evil the day may bring. Those who have a genuine fear of God will consider it a great loss not to have been at the instruction, particularly if they can read.

When the preacher arrives, all should hurry off to the assembly, where the instruction is to be given. The speaker will be inspired to say something that everyone will find useful. You will hear what you did not

expect to hear; the Spirit will speak through the preacher's mouth, and what he says will be to your advantage. Your faith will be the stronger for what you have heard. You will be told, too, how you should behave at home. Everyone, then, should make a point of going to the assembly, where the fruits of the Holy Spirit are to be had.

On the days when there is no instruction, we should take some religious book and read enough of it to do us good spiritually.

The Hours

- 332 IF you are at home at the third hour,¹ you should pray to God and offer him praise. If you are not at home, pray to God in your heart, for it is the time when Christ was nailed to the cross. That was the reason why the old Law ordered that the bread set out in God's presence—a figure of Christ's body and blood—should be offered at this time of day. The sacrifice of the lamb was ordered for a similar purpose, too—the animal was a symbol of the perfect Lamb, Christ being the Shepherd as well as the Bread that comes down from heaven.

In the same way, you should pray at the sixth hour,² thinking of Christ hanging on the cross while the sun was checked in its course and darkness reigned supreme. Pray earnestly at this time, like him who in that darkened world prayed for the unbelieving Jews.

At the ninth hour,³ your prayer and praise should be protracted, like the prayer of the just in praise of the God who is true to his promise, the God who remembered his saints and sent his Word to give them light. It was at this time that Christ, pierced with the spear, poured forth water and blood, and lighted the rest of the day's span and brought it to evening. By making the light return as he went to sleep, he gave us an image of his resurrection.

Pray, too, before you lie down to rest. About midnight, get up again, wash your hands with water and once more set about your prayer. If your wife is there, then of course, you should both pray together. If she is not yet a Christian, go into another room and pray there, and then go back to bed.

Do not neglect your prayers: being married does not make you unclean. When you have washed, you have no need to wash again immediately after; you are clean as it is (cf. Jn. 13:10). If you make the sign of the cross with your moist breath, taking it on your hand,⁴ the whole of your body

¹ 9 a.m.

² 12 noon.

³ 3 p.m.

⁴ Some MSS. have 'saliva' instead of 'breath'. Dom Botte prefers 'breath'.

will be clean, right down to your feet. You have received the gift of the Spirit and the lustral water has poured over you, gushing, as it were, from its source. All who accept these gifts with faith in their hearts are made clean by them.

We must pray, then, at this time of night, because our fathers, to whom we owe our traditions, have taught us that all creation then stands still for a moment and praises the Lord. The stars, the trees and the waters pause awhile, and the entire army of angels joins with the souls of the just and gives to God the service of its praise. The faithful too should therefore be eager to pray at this hour.

The Lord himself testifies to the practice. 'See,' he says, 'a cry was raised about the middle of the night, and they said: Look, the bridegroom is coming. Get up and go to meet him' (cf. Mt. 25:6). And he continues: 'Be, then, on the watch, for you do not know when he will come' (cf. Mt. 25:13).

About cock-crow, get up once more and pray again, for it was at this time, while the cock was crowing, that the children of Israel denied Christ, whereas *we* have come to know Christ by faith. We are waiting, too, for the day—the day when the dead will rise again—and hoping for the light, the light that is eternal.

If you do this, keeping these mysteries in mind, teaching them to one another and showing the catechumens how to act in accordance with them, you will never give way to temptation or lose your souls, for you will always be thinking of Christ.

The Sign of the Cross

- 333 ALWAYS try to make the sign of the cross on your forehead as well as you can. The sign of the passion is of proven efficacy against the Devil, provided that you make it at the prompting of your faith, in the knowledge that it will protect you like a shield, and not out of a desire to be seen. When the Enemy sees this outward token of the strength that is in us, this sign that we are like the Word, he takes himself off—not that he is afraid of us, but because he fears the Spirit who is inspiring us. When Moses sacrificed the lamb and sprinkled the thresholds and lintels with its blood, he was foreshadowing our present belief in the Paschal Lamb. Let us make the sign with our hands on our foreheads and eyes, to drive away him who is bent on our destruction.

ORIGEN ON PRAYER

The Advantages of Prayer

- 334 IT seems to me that when a man prays the right way, or tries as hard as he can to do so, he will derive a great deal of benefit from it. In the first place, it is certainly advisable to prepare the mind for prayer. By thus settling the mind, one puts oneself in God's presence and acts as though he were there, looking at one. Certain kinds of day-dream and certain memories can pervert any train of reasoning we may attempt to base on them; but it follows on the same grounds that the thought of the God in whom we trust, the God who sees every stirring in our souls, even in the darkest parts of them, cannot but be beneficial. Those who think of God as present and watching them, as coming into men's minds before they can think of him themselves, as probing human hearts and desires, will begin to try and please him.

Even supposing there were no other advantage in preparing the mind for prayer, the mere effort to turn the mind devoutly the proper way at prayer-time is not to be despised. Those who give themselves perseveringly to prayer know from experience how many sins they avoid and how they progress in virtue when this practice has become a habit with them. The mere remembrance of a man of fame and wisdom, mere thought about him, will make us want to imitate him and will do much to restrain our evil impulses. Obviously, to think of God, the Father of us all, when we pray, will be more beneficial than that, if we are convinced that he is present and that he hears us when we speak to him.

The Acceptance of Trials

- 335 CLEARLY, if we pray like that, before we have finished speaking we shall . . . hear the answer, 'I am here at thy side'—provided, of course, that we rejected all carping criticisms of Providence before we began to pray, as the text, 'Banish from thy midst oppression, and the finger pointed scornfully, and the words of discontent' (Is. 58:9), evidently requires of us.

Those who accept whatever happens to them have nothing to oppress them. They do not point a scornful finger at God, for they know that all he commands he designs for our training. They do not murmur, discontentedly, even in the privacy of their own thoughts, let alone audibly. If they did, they would be like those unsatisfactory servants who criticise their masters' orders but are not open about it: they dare not express their discontent in words, but they mutter fiercely against their employers' schemes whatever happens. It would be as though they wanted the Lord of the universe not to know what it was that had displeased them.

This, I think, is referred to in Job in the words, 'Though all this had befallen him, Job did not sin with his lips against God' (Job 2:10); and with reference to a previous temptation of his we find the words, 'Though all this had befallen him, Job did not sin against God' (Job 1:22). It is also forbidden in Deuteronomy, where the text says: 'And here a base thought may come into thy mind, which thou must put away from thee; that the seventh year¹ is at hand' (Deut. 15:9).

Spiritual Transformation

336 THOSE who pray in this way receive much grace, so that they become capable of closer union with the Spirit of the Lord, who fills the whole world (Wisd. 1:7), who fills heaven and earth, as the prophet tells us—'Do I not fill heaven and earth? the Lord says' (Jer. 23:24).

Again, the purification I have mentioned will bring them a share in the prayer of God's Word, who is with all of us, even those who do not know him. There is no one from whose prayer he holds aloof. He prays with us to the Father, for he is the Mediator: the Son of God is the High Priest who presents our offerings to the Father and pleads our cause before him—when we pray, he prays with us; when we plead our cause, he pleads it for us. But he does not pray for those who refuse to offer continual prayer through him, for he does not regard such people as members of his own family; he does not plead their cause with God as though it were his own if they do not observe what he said about praying always and not giving way to discouragement.

'He told them a parable,' we read, 'shewing them that they ought to pray continually, and never be discouraged. There was a city once, he said, in which lived a judge,' etc. (Lk. 18:1). And before this we find the words: 'And he said to them: Let us suppose that one of you has a friend, to whom he goes at dead of night, and asks him, Lend me three loaves of bread, neighbour; a friend of mine has turned in to me after a journey, and I have nothing to offer him' (Lk. 11:5-6). And a little further on: 'I tell you, even if he will not bestir himself to grant it out of friendship, shameless asking will make him rise and give his friend all that he needs' (Lk. 11:8).

If we believe that what Jesus says is infallible, we are bound to want to pray earnestly when we hear him say, 'Ask and the gift will come. Everyone that asks, will receive' (Mt. 7:7, 8). Our Father is good, and we have received from him the Spirit of adoption; when we ask him for food he gives us living bread, and not a stone, which was what the Enemy would

¹ The year of discharge.

have given to Jesus and his disciples if he could. What the Father gives is good; when we ask him for his gifts, he showers them down on us from heaven.

Christ and the Angels Pray with Men

- 337 IT is not only the High Priest who prays with us when we are praying as we ought, but the angels as well: they rejoice more in heaven over one repentant sinner than over ninety-nine souls that are justified and need no repentance (Lk. 15:7).

There are also the souls of those saints who have already gone to their rest. . . . By far the greatest of the virtues, as we know from the word of God, is the love of our neighbour; and this, we must admit, the saints at rest practise far better towards all of us who are still carrying on the struggle in this life than we, with all our human weaknesses, can do in our efforts to help those weaker than ourselves.

The quotation, 'If one part is suffering, all the rest suffer with it; if one part is treated with honour, all the rest find pleasure in it' (1 Cor. 12:26) applies to those who love their fellow-men. And we can appropriately say of the love shown us by those who have ceased to live this life of ours, that it is their 'anxious care for all the churches. Does anyone feel a scruple? they share it. Is anyone's conscience hurt? They are ablaze with indignation' (2 Cor. 11:28, 29). Again, Christ declares that when any of the saints are ill, he is ill with them himself; he is in prison, too, with them, he says, naked with them, homeless, hungry and thirsty when they are. Everyone who has read the gospels must see that as he took on himself the sufferings of those who believed in him, Christ regarded those sufferings as his own.

The Ministry of the Angels

- 338 GOD'S angels came and ministered to Jesus (Mt. 4:11). We are not to suppose that the angels gave their services to Jesus for a short while only; their ministrations were not limited to the time of his life on earth among men, when he was with the faithful not as one who sat at table but as a servant (Lk. 22:27).

There must be a great many angels in Jesus' service, because his aim is to gather the children of Israel together one by one, to assemble those of them who are scattered through the world, to save those who do him reverence and seek his help. The angels must be working with him all the time, more than the apostles ever did, to secure increase for the Church, to bring it up to its full complement. We read in John's Apocalypse that there are angels set over the churches; and it is not for nothing that angels go up and down

over the Son of man. Those who have the light of true knowledge to guide them have seen them.

At prayer-time, we tell the angels what we need and they do what they can for us, in accordance with the general commission they have received. It may be helpful if I give you an illustration; perhaps that will make my meaning clearer. Imagine, then, a doctor anxious to do what is expected of him. He comes across a sick man who is imploring God for a cure. If the doctor knows the kind of treatment the disease requires, he will obviously feel that he ought to treat the patient; and he may well think that if such an idea has come into his mind, it is a sign that God has answered the patient's prayer for healing.

Or take a man who has more than enough of this world's goods. If he is charitably disposed and he overhears a poor man praying, he will see that the man's prayer is answered. In so doing, he will be acting as an agent of God and carrying out God's designs. It was God who brought together at prayer-time the man who had something to give and the man who was praying for a gift: his perfect providence cannot overlook those in want.¹

We cannot think that things like these happen by chance. No; God knows how many hairs there are on the head of every single saint of his. He it is that brings together at prayer-time the man who is to be the agent of his will and the man who needs his charity, so that the one can give the other what he is confidently praying for. We must suppose that in the same way, angels are sometimes present when we pray, to help us to obtain what we ask for, since they are God's servants and overseers. Not only that, but we each have an angel of our own, even those of us who are of no account in the Church. These angels always see our Father in heaven face to face; they gaze on the godhead of him that created us. They also pray with us and, in so far as they can, they help us to obtain what we pray for.

On Praying Always

- 339 AS the practice of the virtues and the observance of the commandments form part of prayer, those who pray as well as work at the tasks they have to do, and combine their prayer with suitable activity, will be praying always. That is the only way in which it is possible never to stop praying. We can see that it is if we consider the entire life of the saint as one long prayer, of which what we commonly call prayer is only a part. Prayer in the accepted sense ought to be made at least three times a day,

¹ The same idea occurs in P. Lippert's book, *A Modern Job Speaks With God*, pp. 78-9 E.C.P.—S

as is clear from the example of Daniel, who prayed so in spite of the great danger he incurred by it (Dan. 6:15).

Then there was Peter, who had gone up to the house-top about noon to pray, on that occasion when he saw the bundle let down by its four corners from heaven. This denotes the second prayer of the three, the one that David was referring to when he said:

You will hear my prayer in the morning;
in the morning will I stand before you, and then I shall see (Ps. 5:4, 5).

The third prayer is the one mentioned in the verse:

When I lift up my hands, be it as acceptable as the evening sacrifice (Ps. 140:2).

The night, too, cannot in decency be allowed to pass without its prayer, for David says:

At dead of night I rose to praise you
for your just dealings (Ps. 118:62);

and of Paul we are told in the Acts of the Apostles: 'At midnight, Paul and Silas were at their prayers, while the prisoners listened to them' (Acts 16:25).

What We Ought to Ask For

340 LET us consider the saying: 'Ask for the greater things and you will be given the lesser as well; ask for heavenly blessings and earthly ones will be given you too.'¹ In comparison with the true and the spiritual, the merely symbolic and figurative is petty and very much of this earth, is 'lesser' and 'earthly'. When the Word of God urges us to pray as the saints did, asking in truth what they asked in figure, he says that the things of heaven, the greater things, are denoted by the things of earth, the lesser things.

It is as though he were saying: If you want to become spiritual, ask for the blessings of heaven when you pray. When once you have these blessings you will become heavenly yourselves, and so you will have the kingdom of heaven for your inheritance; and when you have the greater goods, you will be in a position to enjoy the greatest. As for earthly things, the things you must have for your bodily needs, those the Father will give you as well, in so far as they are essential to you.

¹ This is an anagraphon (one of Christ's unwritten sayings) and has not been transmitted through the gospels. It is a variant of Mt. 6:33 and Lk. 13:21.

Attitudes in Prayer

- 341 IT seems to me that when we are going to pray, we ought to collect ourselves somewhat and prepare a little, so as to come with greater keenness and zest to the main part of our prayer. We should banish all anxiety and fretfulness from our minds, and think as far as we can of the greatness of the God we are approaching, and remember that it is irreverent to come before him gaping, careless and without any show of respect.

When we come to pray, we should not lift up our hands until we have lifted up our souls, or raise our eyes until we have raised our minds to God; we should not rise to our feet until our thoughts have risen from the things of earth and we have set them on the Lord of the universe. All resentment at wrongs we may think have been done to us must be put aside, if we want God to forgive us the wrongs we have done ourselves—for we have often sinned against our neighbour, and we know we have sometimes offended against reason too.

Of the innumerable postures the body can take up, the most preferable is obviously the one where the hands are held out and the eyes are raised, for the body is then showing how the soul ought to be behaving during prayer. This I say independently of any consideration of circumstances. But circumstances may arise in which it will be well to pray sitting (one's feet may be so bad that one simply cannot stop thinking about them) or even lying down (if one has a temperature or something of that sort). On other occasions, e.g. at sea or when our occupations will not allow us to withdraw to a secluded spot to pay our debt of prayer, we must pray all the same, without bothering about these external attitudes.

The kneeling posture is the right one in which to accuse oneself of one's sins before God and to beg of him healing and absolution, for it is a symbol of that prostration and subjection of which Paul was thinking when he said: 'With this in mind, I fall on my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, that Father from whom all fatherhood in heaven and on earth takes its title' (Eph. 3:14, 15). This spiritual kneeling—so called because every created thing worships God and humbles itself before him when it hears the name of Jesus—was also, I think, in the apostle's mind when he said: 'So that everything in heaven and on earth and under the earth must bend the knee before the name of Jesus' (Phil. 2:10).

The Place of Prayer

- 342 THE thing to realise is that any place can be suitable for prayer: it becomes so as soon as someone prays well in it. . . . But if we want to pray quietly without being disturbed, we may choose a particular place in our own

house, when that is possible—a consecrated place, so to speak—and pray there. . . .

There is one place where it is especially beneficial to pray, and that is the place where the faithful assemble. It is reasonable to suppose that the angelic powers take part with the faithful in their assemblies, and the power of our Lord and Saviour himself is present there. The spirits of the saints must be there too, it seems to me: those of the saints who are already at rest and, clearly, the spirits of those who are still alive—though how that can be is not easy to say.

With regard to the angels, we can reason thus. The Lord's angels fly round about those who fear him and deliver them from danger (Ps. 33 : 8); and Jacob's assertion that an angel has rescued him from all his troubles (Gen. 48 : 16) applies not only to him but to all who serve God, for God understands the needs of us all. If this is true, then it is probable that when the faithful meet together to glorify Christ, every one of them will have his own angel flying round him (since they all fear Christ). Each angel will stay beside the man whom he has been commissioned to defend and direct. Thus, when the saints are gathered together, there will really be two assemblies, one of men and one of angels.

Raphael could say that he had offered the prayers of Tobias and made mention of them to God, and afterwards he offered the prayers of Sara, who later became Tobias' daughter-in-law. If that was the case when only one person was involved, what must it be like when many meet together, all with the same thoughts and outlook, all travelling together along the same road, all forming one body in Christ?

Our Father

- 343 'OUR Father, who art in heaven.' It would be worth while making an exhaustive search of the Old Testament (as it is called) to see if any prayer could be found in which God is called Father. I have looked as carefully as I can, but up to the present I have not found a single instance. By this I do not mean to say that God was never called Father under the old covenant, or that those who believed in God were not called sons of God; I mean that there is no prayer in which God was named Father with the sort of confidence later prescribed by the Saviour.

That God was called Father, and that those who came to believe what he said to them were called his sons, can be seen over and over again. In Deuteronomy, for instance: 'You have forsaken the God that gave you birth, you have forgotten the God that fed you' (Deut. 32 : 18). Again: 'Is this the return thou wouldst made to that father who calls thee his own, that creator who fashioned thee?' (Deut. 32 : 6). Yet again: 'My sons have

lost their faith' (Deut. 32:20). In Isaiah: 'I have engendered sons and brought them up, and they have abandoned me' (Is. 1:2). And in Malachias: 'Son to father, servant to master shall give his due. Your father I, where is the honour, your master I, where is the reverence you owe me?' (Mal. 1:6).

Although the name 'father' was given to God and 'son' to those who were born of him through belief in what he said, it remains true that the full meaning and force of sonship were unknown to the ancients. The passages I have quoted show that those whom they called sons were really subjects. As the apostle says, 'One who comes into his property while he is still a child has no more liberty than one of the servants, though all the estate is his; he is under the control of guardians and trustees, until he reaches the age prescribed by his father' (Gal. 4:1-2). Time received its fulfilment with the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ: from that moment, sonship was open to all who would take it, as Paul tells us. 'The spirit you have received,' he says, 'is not a spirit of slavery, to govern you by fear; it is the spirit of adoption, which makes us cry out, Abba, Father' (Rom. 8:15).

In John's gospel, too, we are told: 'But all those who welcomed him, he empowered to become the children of God, all those who believe in his name' (Jn. 1:12). And it is because of this spirit of adoption that 'if a man is born of God, he does not live sinfully, he is true to his parentage; he cannot be a sinner, if he is born of God', as we learn from John's Catholic Epistle (1 Jn. 3:9).

If we think of those words in Luke, 'When you pray, you are to say, Father', and if we remember what they mean, we shall not dare to call him by that name unless we really are sons of his; we shall not want to expose ourselves to the imputation of impiety in addition to all our other sins. What I mean is this. In the first Epistle to the Corinthians, Paul says: 'No one can say that Jesus is Lord, except through the Holy Spirit; and no one speaking through the Holy Spirit says that Jesus is accursed' (12:3). Exactly what is implied by saying through the Holy Spirit that Jesus is Lord is not clear, since the title is often used by hypocrites and heretics, and sometimes it is even used by demons if they are vanquished by the virtue of it. No one will presume to say that any of these are calling Jesus Lord through the Holy Spirit.

They are not in a position to say that Jesus is Lord: only those who serve God's Word and proclaim by all they do that there is no other Lord but he, can truly say that Jesus is Lord. If that is true of those who say that Jesus is Lord, the contrary is true of their opposites: every sinner, in so far

as he offends against the moral law, curses the Word of God; his deeds cry out that Jesus is accursed. . . .

Everyone who is born of God and free from sin, everyone who receives his being from the God that is utterly averse from sin, through all that he does is really saying: 'Our Father, who art in heaven.' The Spirit himself assures his spirit that he is God's child and heir and has the inheritance of Christ to share in. He suffers with Christ and he hopes, not without reason, that he will also receive glory with Christ (cf. Rom. 8:15).

Acting so, such people are not saying 'Our Father' by halves. With them the heart, which is the fount and source of good works, certainly believes, and it will obtain justification; just as the lips, in keeping with the heart, confess the Lord and will receive salvation (cf. Rom. 10:10).

Every deed of theirs, every word and thought, are given shape by the only-begotten Word, taking his own self as the model; they all reflect the image of the God we cannot see; they bear the likeness of the Creator who makes his sun rise on the evil and the good alike and lets his rain fall on both the just and the unjust (cf. Mt. 5:45). They thus have in themselves an image of the heavenly Word, who is himself the Image of God.

The saints, then, are images of the Image; and as the Image is also the Son, they reflect his sonship—not through some merely external resemblance, but through being like him deep down within themselves. They are made new in spirit and are so transformed that they come to be exactly like the Son in his glorified body.

So much for the people who say 'Our Father, who art in heaven'. As for those who commit sin, it is obvious that they belong to the Devil, as John says in his Catholic Epistle, because the Devil was a sinner from the first (1 Jn. 3:8). When a man is born of God, God's generative power remains in him and prevents him from sinning, for it keeps him true to the image of the only-begotten Word. In the same way, the Devil's reproductive force is in the man who commits sin, lodging in his soul and preventing him from acting as he ought. But if the Son of God was revealed, it was to wreck the Devil's achievements (1 Jn. 3:8); and when he comes into our souls and undoes what the Devil has done there, he can also destroy the seeds of evil that are left in us; and so we can become children of God. Let us not, then, suppose that what we are taught to say is a mere form of words, designed for recitation as a prayer at stated times. If we really grasp what we are told about continual prayer and if we really do pray continually, our whole life will be one perpetual utterance of the words, 'Our Father, who art in heaven.' We shall live not as though we were on earth but as though we were already in heaven, which is God's throne; because God's kingdom has been planted in all those who bear

within themselves the image of the heavenly Word and so have become heavenly with him.

CYPRIAN ON THE LORD'S PRAYER

Prayer is to be for the common good (8)

344 IN the first place, the Master who laid such stress on peace and unity would not have us pray each for himself and his own private needs; when we pray, we are not to pray for ourselves alone. We do not say, 'My Father, who art in heaven' or, 'Give *me* this day *my* daily bread'; we do not ask for our own trespasses alone to be forgiven; and when we pray that we may be delivered from evil, we are not praying only for ourselves either.

Our prayer is for the general good, for the common good. When we pray, we do not pray for our own single selves; we pray for all God's people, because they and we are one. It is the will of the God of peace, who taught us to seek for concord and unity, that we should each pray for all the rest, just as he himself bore everybody's burdens in his own person.

The three young men who were shut in the furnace observed this rule in their prayer; they prayed aloud together and they all gave the same meaning to the words they said. We have it on the authority of holy Scripture, which in showing us how they prayed, also provides an example that we must follow in our own prayers if we want to be as they were. 'Where-upon all three of them,' it says, 'as with one mouth, began to give praise and blessing to God' (Dan. 3:51). Christ had not yet taught them to pray, but even so, they spoke as with one mouth.

And the reason why their prayer was effective and obtained for them what they asked was that it was sincere—it came from the heart. Prayer like that deserves a hearing from the Lord. That, we find, is how the apostles and disciples prayed after the Lord's ascension. 'They all with one mind,' we are told, 'gave themselves up to prayer, together with Mary, who had given him birth, and the rest of the women and his brethren' (cf. Acts 1:14).

If they gave themselves up to prayer with one mind, that shows how earnest and united they were about it. The God who brings like-minded people together in one house (cf. Ps. 67:7) admits to his own house, his divine, eternal house, only those who are of one mind about their prayer.

We say 'Father' because we have become his sons (9)

345 WHAT a wealth of meaning there is in the Lord's Prayer. Concise enough verbally, its spiritual import is inexhaustible. Nothing that can claim a

place in our prayer will be sought in vain in this summary of Heaven's teaching.

'This, then,' Christ said, 'is to be your prayer, Our Father, who art in heaven.' The new man, who has been reborn and restored to his Father by grace, says 'Father' in the first place because he is beginning to behave like a son. 'He came,' we are told, 'to what was his own, and they who were his own gave him no welcome. But all those who did welcome him, he empowered to become the children of God, all those who believe in his name' (Jn. 1:12). All, then, who have learned to believe in his name and have become God's sons should begin by thanking him for it and acknowledging that they are his sons. When they say that God in heaven is their Father, they will be showing by the expression—the first words they utter in their new life—that they have renounced their earthly fathers, to whom they owe their bodies. Henceforth they will know no other Father but the one who is in heaven, they will have none beside him.¹ As Scripture says, 'Here are men who said to their fathers and mothers, "You are no acquaintance of mine." Here are men that treated their own children as strangers. These are they that have heeded thy warnings and kept true to thy covenant' (cf. Deut. 33:9).

And the Lord tells us in the gospel not to give the name 'father' to any man on earth; we are to have only one Father, the one who is in heaven. When his disciple mentioned that his father had died, he said: 'Leave the dead to bury their dead' (Mt. 8:22). The reason why the disciple said that his father was dead was that the only live father is the Father of them that believe.

God is the Father of those who believe in him and are born again of him (10)

346 WE have not merely to be aware, dear brethren, that we are calling him the Father who is in heaven, and to realise what that means; we have to go on and say, 'Our Father,' i.e. the Father of them that believe, the Father of those who have received sanctification from him. Through his spiritual grace we have been born anew, and now we are beginning to be sons of God.

The word also implies criticism and blame of the Jews. The prophets had told them that Christ would visit them; they were the first object of his mission. Yet in spite of that, they refused to believe in him; they

¹ Cf. St. Francis of Assisi, stripping himself of his clothes before the bishop, in his father's presence, and saying: 'From now on, I have only one Father, and I can say in all truth: "Our Father, who art in heaven."'

rejected him; and they carried their cruelty to the point of killing him. They cannot after that call God their Father. The Lord exposes them, to their shame, when he says: 'The father you sprang from is the devil, and you are eager to gratify the appetites which are your father's. He, from the first, was a murderer; and as for truth, he has never taken his stand upon that; there is no truth in him' (cf. Jn. 8:44).

In the prophecy of Isaias, too, God cries out in indignation:

Sons I begot and brought up:
they have rebelled against me.
The ox knows its owner,
the ass its master's crib;
but Israel knows not me,
my people never gives me thought.
Woe to that sinful nation, a people weighed down with sins,
a worthless race, an accursed brood.
You have forsaken the Lord and scorned the Holy One of Israel.
(cf. Is. 1:2-4).

It is a reproach to them when we Christians in our prayers say 'Our Father'; for he is our Father now—we are beginning to realise it—and he has ceased to be the Father of the Jews, who have abandoned him. A sinful nation cannot be his child; it is to those whose sins have been forgiven that the name 'son' is applied and the promise of eternity made. As the Lord himself says: 'Everyone who acts sinfully is the slave of sin, and the slave cannot make his home in the house for ever' (Jn. 8:34, 35).

*If God is our Father, we ought to behave as befits
his sons (11)*

347 HOW merciful God is to us, how abundantly good and kind he shows himself. He wants us to pray in his presence and call him Father; and as Christ is God's Son, we too are to be called God's sons. Not one of us would dare to use that title in our prayers unless he himself had told us that we might.

We must remember, then, brethren, we must reflect, that since we call God our Father, we are bound to act like sons of God. It is a delight to us to have God for our Father: we must enable him to delight in having us for his sons. We should live as though we were God's temples; we should let men see that God lives in us. Our conduct must not prove us unworthy of the Spirit. We belong to heaven now, we belong to the Spirit; so that all our thoughts and actions must be redolent of heaven and the Spirit. The

Lord God himself says: 'I will honour those who honour me; and him that despises me, I will despise' (cf. 1 Kings 2: 30). And the blessed apostle in one of his epistles says: 'You are no longer your own masters. A great price was paid to ransom you; glorify God by making your bodies the shrines of his presence' (1 Cor. 6: 19-20).

*We pray that we may not lose the holiness which God has
bestowed on us (12)*

- 348 AFTER that, we say, 'Hallowed be thy name.' We are not asking for God to be made holy by our prayers; we are asking that the holiness of his name may be made apparent in us. (For that matter, who *could* make God holy? It is from God that all holiness comes.) Because he himself said, 'Be holy, for I am holy' (Lev. 11: 44), we beg and beseech him that we may go on to develop the beginning of holiness we were given at baptism. And this we ask every day. We need fresh holiness day by day, for every day we commit fresh sins, and we must have fresh infusions of holiness to wash them away. The apostle shows us the effect of this gift of holiness, which we owe to God's kindness, when he says: 'It is not the debauched, the idolaters, the adulterous, it is not the effeminate, the sinners against nature, the thieves, the fraudulent, the misers, the drunkards, the bitter of speech, the extortioners that will inherit the kingdom of God. That indeed is what you once were; but now you have been washed clean, now you have been justified, now you have been sanctified in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, by the Spirit of the God we serve' (cf. 1 Cor. 6: 9-11).

We have been sanctified, he says, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, by the Spirit of the God we serve. What we are praying for is that that sanctification may endure in us. Our Lord and Judge warned the man whom he had healed and restored to life not to sin again, lest worse should befall him; and that is why we continually pray, why we beg day and night that with God's help we may always keep the life and holiness that we owe to his grace.

We ask for the coming of God's promised kingdom (13)

- 349 THE next petition in the prayer is: 'Thy kingdom come.' Here we ask for God's kingly power to be communicated to us, in the same way as we pray that the holiness of his name may be made apparent in us. (For there can never have been a time when God was not King. What has always existed and will never cease to exist can never have had a beginning.) What we are really asking is that we may have *our* kingdom, the one promised us by God and bought with the blood Christ shed in his passion.

Before that, we were in the world like slaves, but our prayer is that we may now reign as kings under the supreme kingship of Christ, as he himself promised that we should when he said: 'Come, you that have received a blessing from my Father, take possession of the kingdom which has been prepared for you since the foundation of the world' (Mt. 25:34).

It may be, too, dear brethren, that Christ himself is the kingdom of God. When we say every day that we are longing for the coming of the kingdom, perhaps we are meant to be longing for the coming of Christ; perhaps it is his return that we say we are hoping to hasten. Just as he is the Resurrection, because he is the cause of our rising, so he can be taken to be the kingdom of God, because he is the cause of our ruling.

We do well to ask for the kingdom of God, i.e. the kingdom of heaven, because it includes earthly power as well. But if we have renounced the world, it will be beneath us to seek the honour and power that the world can give: those who dedicate themselves to God and his Christ have their hearts set not on the earthly but on the heavenly.

Continual prayer and supplication are needed if we are not to lose the kingdom of heaven, as the Jews did, although they had the promise of it before we had. The Lord makes this quite clear. 'There are many,' he says, 'who will come from the east and from the west, and will take their places in the kingdom of God with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, while that kingdom's own sons are cast into the darkness without, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth' (Mt. 8:11, 12). He shows by that that the Jews were sons of the kingdom as long as they remained sons of God. When their Father's name ceased to mean anything to them, there was an end to their kingship. That is why we Christians, who have begun to call God Father in our prayers, pray that God's kingly power may be communicated to us.

We pray that his will may be done in us (14)

350 WE go on to say: 'Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.' We are praying not that God may do what he will, but that we may be able to do what he wills. No one can prevent God from doing what he wants to do: but the Devil prevents us from giving entire obedience to God, in deed and even in desire. That is why we beg and pray that God's will may be done in us. We cannot do what he wills unless we have his will-power to help us, i.e. his assistance and protection. Our own resources are not enough to make us strong; if we have any security, it is through the mercy and kindness of God.

The Lord himself showed how weak the human nature was that he had assumed when he said: 'Father, if it is possible, let this chalice pass me by'

(cf. Mt. 26:39). And to teach his disciples that they should do God's will and not their own, he added: 'Only as thy will is, not as mine is' (Mk. 14:36). On another occasion he said: 'It is the will of him who sent me, not my own will, that I have come down from heaven to do' (Jn. 6:38).

If the Son was so eager to do his Father's will, we servants ought to show still more alacrity about doing our Master's will. John, too, in his epistle urges us to do God's will and shows us how to do it. 'Do not,' he says, 'bestow your love on the world, and what the world has to offer; the lover of this world has no love of the Father in him. What does the world offer? Only gratification of corrupt nature, gratification of the eye, gratification of temporal ambition: these things take their rise from worldly desires, not from the Father. The world and its gratifications pass away; the man who does God's will outlives them, for ever' (cf. 1 Jn. 2:15-17). If we want to live for ever, we must do the will of the God who is eternal.

We know the will of God from Christ's example and teaching (15)

- 351 WHAT God's will is we know from Christ's example and teaching. It means behaving humbly, never deviating from the faith, being modest in speech, just in one's dealings and merciful in one's relations with others, and leading a disciplined life. To do God's will is to be incapable of doing harm but capable of bearing it, to keep peace with the brethren, to love God whole-heartedly—to love the Father in him and fear the God. It is to put Christ first, because he put us first, and to let nothing deter us from loving him. It is to stand by his cross bravely and loyally whenever the honour of his name requires us to do battle; to confess him verbally without flinching: when we are put to the question, to fight with the weapon of confidence; when faced with death to be patient, for it is patience that wins the garland. This is what is meant by aiming at a share of Christ's inheritance, keeping God's commandments and doing the Father's will.

We pray that God's will may be done on earth as it is in heaven, i.e. in the body as it is in the soul (16)

- 352 WE ask for God's will to be done in heaven and on earth, both of which have a bearing on our security and salvation. As we received our bodies from the earth and our souls from heaven, we are a compound of heaven and earth; and we pray that God's will may be done in both, i.e. in our bodies and in our souls. There is a conflict between the flesh and the spirit; they are always disagreeing, and every day sees acts of war between them. The

consequence is that we do not do what we should really prefer to do: while the spirit aims at the heavenly and seeks the things of God, the flesh is bent on obtaining earthly, temporal satisfaction. We therefore beg that with God's aid and help, peace may be made between the two of them; for if God's will is done by spirit and flesh alike, the soul, to which he has given new life, will not be in danger of death.

The way the apostle Paul puts it makes this abundantly clear. 'The impulses of the flesh,' he says, 'and the impulses of the spirit are at war with one another; either is clean contrary to the other, and that is why you cannot do all that your will approves. It is easy to see what the flesh produces—such things as adultery, fornication, impurity, incontinence, idolatry, witchcraft, murder, feuds, quarrels, jealousies, outbursts of anger, provocation, rivalries, dissensions, factions, spite, drunkenness and debauchery. I warn you, as I have warned you before, that those who live in such a way will not inherit God's kingdom. Whereas the spirit yields a harvest of love, joy, peace, magnanimity, kindness, faith, gentleness, temperateness, purity' (cf. Gal. 5:17, 19-23).

That is why we pray every day, why, in fact, we are always praying, that God's will for us may be done both in heaven and on earth. And God's will is that the earthly should give way to the heavenly and the first place go to the things of the Spirit, the things of God.

Another explanation of this petition (17)

353 THE meaning may also be this, dear brethren. Since the Lord tells us to love even our enemies and to pray even for people who persecute us, we may be praying here for those who are still earthy and have not yet acquired something of the heavenly. This may be a prayer that God's will, which Christ carried out to the full when he saved and restored the human race, may be done in their regard as well.

Christ does not call his disciples earthy: he says they are the salt of the earth; and the apostle says that the man who came first came from the dust of the earth, while the one who came afterwards came from heaven (1 Cor. 15:47). It is only right that we should pray for the salvation of all men, as Christ has told us to do so. We ought to be like God, our Father, who makes his sun rise on good and bad alike and sends rain to the just and the unjust indifferently.¹

God's will was done in heaven, i.e. in us, when we came to believe, and so we were made to belong to heaven. We pray that in the same way God's

¹ It is a pleasure to find evidence of the missionary outlook, especially at a period when concern for non-Christians was the exception rather than the rule.

will may be done in unbelievers. By their first birth they are still earthy; we ask that being born of water and the Spirit they may become heavenly.

*We ask for our daily bread, i.e. for Christ, so as never
to lose his grace or be severed from his body (18)*

- 354 THE prayer passes on to the next petition and we say: 'Give us this day our daily bread.' This can be taken both spiritually and literally; in God's providence, both meanings are intended to help us to achieve our salvation.

The bread that we need to support our life is Christ; and this bread is *our* bread: it is not available to everybody. We say 'our Father' because he is the Father of those who have faith and understanding; and in the same way, we call this bread 'our bread', because Christ is the Bread of those who have contact with his body. That this bread may be given us we pray every day: for we are in Christ's good graces, we receive the Eucharist daily, the food that will assure our salvation, and we dread that we may commit some grave sin and be forced to abstain from communion. If that happened, we should be deprived of the Bread that comes from heaven, we should be separated from Christ's body, as he implied himself when he said: 'I myself am the living bread that has come down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread of mine, he shall live for ever. And now, what is this bread which I am to give? It is my flesh, given for the life of the world' (cf. Jn. 6: 51, 52).

When he says that there is eternal life for those who eat this bread, it is obvious that this eternal life comes from the touch of his body received in the eucharist at communion. And the contrary of this is always a possibility to be feared; we must pray that when people have to abstain from communion and are deprived of Christ's body, they may not be debarred from salvation for ever, as the Lord warned us that they might be when he said: 'You can have no life in yourselves, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood' (Jn. 6: 54). Hence our daily prayer for the gift of this bread, i.e. for the gift of Christ. It is a prayer that we may continue to live in Christ and may not deprive ourselves of his body and his grace.

*We ought to ask for the food we need today, not for what
we may need in the future (19)*

- 355 THE petition can also be taken to mean that as we have renounced the world and forsaken its riches and pomps, certain that we shall receive spiritual grace in their stead, all that we should ask in the way of food is the little that will meet our strict needs. The Lord's own teaching on the point is contained in his saying: 'No one can be a disciple of mine unless he gives

up all that he has' (cf. Lk. 14:33). As we have taken our Master at his word and given up everything and begun to act like disciples, we must not pray for more food than we shall need in a day; we must not extend the scope of our prayer to include the future. This again is what the Lord would have of us, for he said: 'Do not fret over tomorrow; leave tomorrow to fret over its own needs; for today, today's troubles are enough' (Mt. 6:34).

As they are told not to fret about the next day, Christ's disciples are right not to ask for more than a day's food at a time. To pray for God's kingdom to come quickly and at the same time to try and secure a long life in this world would be contradictory. And when the blessed apostle comes to instruct us on this subject, for the increase of our faith and hope, he too says: 'Empty-handed we came into the world, and empty-handed, beyond question, we must leave it; why then, if we have food and clothing to last us out, let us be content with that. Those who would be rich fall into temptation, fall into a trap; all those dangerous appetites, which sink men into ruin here and perdition hereafter. The love of money is a root from which every kind of evil springs, and there are those who have suffered shipwreck of their faith by making that their ambition, involving themselves in a world of sorrows' (cf. 1 Tim. 6:7-10).

Christ tells us to set no store by riches, because they are dangerous (20)

356 CHRIST shows us that we must set no store by riches and that they are in fact actually dangerous: they are at the root of all the evil suggestions that with their plausible lies flatter and delude men's dull minds. And when in his folly the rich man sat dreaming of his great worldly wealth and gloating over his abundant harvests, the Lord showed him his error by saying to him: 'Thou fool, this night thou must render up thy soul; and who will be master now of all thou hast laid by?' (Lk. 12:20).

The fool was to die that night, and there he was rejoicing over his crops; his time was already up, and yet he was brooding over that mass of provisions. Whereas to reach the peak of perfection, the Lord tells us, we must sell all that we have or give it to the poor and lay up treasure for ourselves in heaven.

He says that we shall be in a position to follow him and suffer gloriously, as he did, if we travel light and unencumbered, avoiding entanglement in the anxieties that family affairs bring with them. We are to send on our goods before us and then, free and without ties, go on after them ourselves to God. In preparation for that, let us all learn to make this petition and see from the terms of it what we ought to be like.

If we possess God, we shall want for nothing (21)

357 IF we live good lives, we shall never be in want of our daily bread. 'The Lord will not kill the good man with hunger' (cf. Prov. 10:3), Scripture says; and again: 'Now youth is past, and I have grown old; yet never did I see the good man forsaken, or his children begging their bread' (Ps. 36:25). The Lord, too, makes us this promise when he says: 'Do not fret, then, asking, What are we to eat? or What are we to drink? or How shall we find clothing? It is for the heathen to busy themselves over such things; you have a Father in heaven who knows that you need them all. Make it your first care to find the kingdom of God, and his approval, and all those things shall be yours without the asking' (Mt. 6:31-33).

He promises that if we seek God's kingdom and God's approval, everything will be provided for us. As everything belongs to God, when once we have God we have everything, provided of course that we belong to God ourselves. Thus it was that when Daniel was shut in the lion-pit by the king's orders, God sent him his dinner, and the hungry beasts left the man of God alone and let him take his food. So too, Elias was fed on his flight, in his seclusion and in time of persecution; he was served by ravens, his food was brought by birds. Yes, wild beasts can keep their distance, birds can wait at table, but the human will is so horribly cruel that men are always on the prowl, always ready to pounce on their prey.

*When we have asked for our food, we beg for our sins to be forgiven,
lest we should imagine ourselves to be sinless (22)*

358 AFTER this, we beg pardon for our sins, saying: 'And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.' Having asked for our subsistence, we also ask that our sins may be forgiven: as our food comes from God, our life should be in God, and we should be concerned not simply about this present life, which is lived in time, but about the life that is eternal. To that life we can gain access if our sins are forgiven. (The Lord calls our sins debts here, just as elsewhere in the gospel he says: 'I remitted all that debt of thine at thy entreaty'—Mt. 18:32.)

It is a wholesome necessity for us to be reminded that we are sinners, and a sign of God's providence that we *are* so reminded by being obliged to ask pardon for our sins: we ask God to be lenient with us, and that makes us think of looking into our consciences. Lest we should suppose ourselves innocent of sin and become self-satisfied, and fall the lower for thinking too highly of ourselves, we are plainly told that we sin every day, because we are required to pray every day for our sins to be forgiven.

John, too, says in his epistle: 'Sin is with us; if we deny that, we are

cheating ourselves; it means that truth does not dwell in us. No, it is when we confess our sins that he forgives us our sins, ever true to his word, ever dealing right with us, and all our wrong-doing is purged away' (1 Jn. 1:8, 9). He keeps a firm hold of two truths in that epistle of his: one is that we are bound to pray for our sins to be forgiven; the other is that when we ask for forgiveness, we obtain it. He says that the Lord is always true to his word in forgiving sins, because the Lord told us to pray for our debts and sins to be forgiven, and promised that if we did, his Father's mercy and pardon would follow.

On what terms our sins are forgiven (23)

359 BUT the Lord also stated his terms; we were to be bound by contract, and the contract was to be conditional. We were to ask that our debts might be forgiven us to the extent to which we had forgiven our own debtors; and we had to realise that we should not obtain forgiveness for our sins unless we gave the like to those who were indebted to us. As he said on another occasion: 'Award shall be made to you as you have made award, in the same measure' (Mt. 7:2).

Then there was the servant who was put in prison because he would not waive his claims on his fellow-servant, even though his own debt had been cancelled in full by his master. Because he would not be lenient with his fellow-servant, he lost the fruit of his master's leniency himself. Christ explains the situation in still stronger terms and is even more severe and rigorous when he comes to give express directions about it. 'When you stand praying,' he says, 'forgive whatever wrong any man has done you; so that your Father who is in heaven may forgive you your transgressions; if you do not forgive, your Father who is in heaven will not forgive your transgressions either' (Mk. 11:25, 26).

There will be no excuse for us on the day of judgement; the sentence we have passed on others will then be passed on us; what we have done to them we shall have to suffer ourselves. God tells us to be at peace and harmony in his house, to be of one mind there. He would have us always remain as he made us by the second birth he gave us. We have been made children of God: we must continue to live at peace with God. We have received the one Spirit: our minds and hearts must also be at one. When a man is on bad terms with his brother, God will have none of his sacrifice; he tells him he must first go back and be reconciled, for if prayer is to pacify God, it must come from the peacefully inclined. Peace among us all, brotherly love, a people united through the unity of Father, Son and Holy Spirit—that is the sort of sacrifice that God particularly likes.

*The prayer that God accepts is the prayer of the
peaceable (23)*

360 WHEN the first sacrifices were offered, by Abel and Cain, God did not consider the gifts themselves that were made him, so much as the spirit in which they were made. If he was pleased with the spirit, he was pleased with the gift as well. Abel was a man of honour, a man disposed to peace; he offered his sacrifice to God with a clean heart. The rest of us can learn from him that when we offer our gifts, we should come to the altar fearing God, with hearts undivided, ready to do the bidding of justice, loving peace and harmony. As Abel displayed these qualities when he offered sacrifice to God, it was fitting that he should afterwards be offered in sacrifice to God himself and be the first to show what martyrdom meant. As he possessed the justice and peace that come from the Lord, the shedding of his glorious blood could aptly prefigure the Lord's passion. It is to such as he that the Lord gives the garland, and such as he will sit with the Lord in judgement on the last day.

But when a man fomented discord and dissidence and is not at peace with his neighbours, we know from both the apostle and the gospel that even if he dies for Christ's sake, he cannot escape responsibility for the dissension he has caused among the brethren. As Scripture says, 'A man cannot hate his brother without being a murderer, and no murderer can gain entry to heaven or live with God' (cf. 1 Jn. 3:15).

We cannot expect to live with Christ if, instead of taking Christ for our pattern, we model ourselves on Judas. You can tell what a sin this must be when you see that even the baptism of blood cannot wash it away. You can tell what a crime it is when you see that even martyrdom cannot atone for it.

*The Enemy can attempt nothing against us without
God's permission (25)*

361 A FURTHER thing the Lord tells us to say in our prayers, and rightly so, is: 'And suffer us not to be led into temptation.' In these words we are shown that the Enemy can attempt nothing against us unless God first allows him to do so. Their object is to make us turn all our reverence, devotion and attention to God, since the power the Evil One has to tempt us depends on the power of God. This the Bible proves when it says: 'Nabuchodonosor, king of Babylon, came to Jerusalem and laid siege to it, and the Lord gave it into his hand' (cf. 4 Kings 24:11; Dan. 1:1, 2).

The power the Evil One is given to attack us depends on the extent of our sins, as is shown by the text:

Who made a spoil of Jacob
and gave Israel to the conquerors?
It was the God
against whom they had sinned.
Because his ways lay untrodden
and his laws went unheeded,
he poured out on Israel his angry retribution (cf. Is. 42:24).

And again, when Solomon sinned, breaking the Lord's commandments and forsaking his ways, it was said: 'God gave Solomon Satan to contend with' (cf. Kings 11:23).

The Devil's power over us may be a punishment, or it may give us an opportunity of obtaining glory. This petition reminds us of our weakness (26)

362 LEAVE to attack us is given for one of two reasons: when we have sinned, it is to punish us; when we are merely being put to the test, it is to afford us an opportunity of obtaining glory. That this last was the case with Job God shows us when he says: 'With all his possessions do what thou wilt, so thou leave himself unharmed' (Job 1:12).

The Lord says in the gospel, when he comes to his passion: 'Thou wouldst not have any power over me at all, if it had not been given thee from above' (Jn. 19:11). Thus, when we pray that we may not fall into temptation, we are reminded of our weakness, our lack of strength. No one saying this prayer can have the insolence to think highly of himself; he cannot be so proud and arrogant as to suppose that he is of any great worth. We cannot take the credit for confessing him or suffering for him if we remember that the Lord himself taught us humility. 'Watch and pray,' he said, 'that you may not enter into temptation; the spirit is willing enough, but the flesh is weak' (Mt. 26:41). When we are humble and submissive enough to acknowledge that the credit for all the good we do is due to God, we can be sure that he will grant us whatever we ask, provided that we are in earnest and that we ask him reverently, wishing to see him honoured.

The last petition is concerned with all the Enemy's schemes against us (27)

363 AFTER this, at the end of the prayer comes a clause in which all that we have been asking and praying for is briefly summed up and restated. When

at the very end we say 'But deliver us from evil', we understand by 'evil' all the harm the Devil tries to do us in this world. We shall have a strong, secure defence against it if we have God to deliver us, if he grants us his help when we beg and pray him for it. When once we have said 'Deliver us from evil', there is nothing else left to ask for. We have asked God's protection against evil, and as soon as we have that, we are safe and secure against all the machinations of the Devil and the world. Who will fear the world when he has God to protect him as long as he is in the world?

CYRIL OF JERUSALEM

FIFTH MYSTAGOGICAL CATECHESIS

364 THEN we say the prayer which the Saviour taught his disciples. With clear consciences we can call God our Father and say:

'Our Father, who art in heaven.' God's love for men knows no bounds. Men turn away from him and wallow in the vilest of sins; yet he forgives their sins and grants them a share of his grace and even lets them call him Father. 'Our Father, who art in heaven.' The name 'heaven' can also be given to those who bear some likeness to the heavenly. God lives in such people and takes his ease in them.

'Hallowed be thy name.' God's name is holy of its very nature, whether we call it so or not. What profanes it is sin, as is shown by the text, 'Because of you, my name is continually blasphemed by the gentiles' (Is. 52:5). When we pray that God's name may be hallowed by our means, we are not praying that something which is not yet holy may become holy; we are asking that its holiness may be apparent in us, from the holiness of our lives and from our conduct, which should be in keeping with the gift of sanctification.

'Thy kingdom come.' It needs a pure heart to say with confidence, 'Thy kingdom come.' Those who obey Paul's injunction, 'You must not, then, allow sin to tyrannise over your perishable bodies' (Rom. 6:12); those who see to it that they are clean in deed and thought and word—those are the ones who can say, 'Thy kingdom come.'

'Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.' Those blessed creatures, God's holy angels, do God's will, as David says in the Psalms—'Bless the Lord, all you angels of his; angels of sovereign strength that carry out his commandments' (Ps. 102:20). When, then, you say this prayer, you are virtually saying: 'As your will is done by the angels, so may it be done by me, Lord, on earth.'

'Give us this day the bread that we need for our subsistence.' The bread that we need for our subsistence is not ordinary bread but the holy bread.

'That we need for our subsistence' means 'that nourishes the substance of the soul'. This is not the bread that travels down into the belly, and so is cast into the sewer (Mt. 15:17); it enters into the whole of a man's being; it does good to body and soul alike. 'This day' means 'every day', as in Paul's phrase, 'As long as "this day" has still a meaning' (Heb. 3:13).

'And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us.' We all have plenty of sins to account for; we sin in word and thought, and very often the things we do are open to censure.

'Sin is with us; if we deny that, we are cheating ourselves,' as John says (1 Jn. 1:8). We are making a contract with God, asking him to forgive us our sins, as we forgive our neighbour what he owes us. We shall do well, then, to think of what we have to gain from that contract and at what a price it comes to us; and then we shall not be slow to forgive other people. The offences that are done to us are trifling things, pin-pricks, mere nothings; the offences we commit against God are serious, and if it were not for his love for us, there would be no forgiving them. See to it, then, that you do not shut yourselves out from God's forgiveness of the grave sins you have committed against him, simply because you will not forgive tiny trifles yourself.

'And lead us not, Lord, into temptation.' Is the Lord teaching us to pray that we may have no temptations of any kind? If that were so, how could he say elsewhere that a man is of no worth until he has been put to the test, or again: 'Consider yourselves happy indeed, my brethren, when you encounter trials of every sort' (Jos. 1:2).

Not to be led into temptation must mean not to be overwhelmed by temptation.

Temptation is, in fact, like a river that is difficult to cross. Those who are not overwhelmed by temptation are good swimmers; they cross the river without sinking. But those who cannot swim are submerged when they enter the water.

Thus Judas, for example, fell into temptation—he was tempted to avarice—and he failed to swim through it; the waters closed over him and he perished, body and soul. Peter was tempted to deny his Lord. He fell into temptation but he did not sink; he swam manfully and escaped from his temptation. In another text you find the whole choir of saints giving thanks because they have been delivered from temptation:

Yes, Lord, thou hast put us to the proof,
tested us as men test silver in the fire;
led us into a snare,
and bowed our backs with trouble,

while human masters rode us down;
our way led through fire and water,
yet in the end thou hast granted us relief (Ps. 65:10-12).

You see how plainly they say that they have been tempted and have not been vanquished by temptation. 'Yet in the end,' they say, 'thou hast granted us relief.' That they obtained relief means that they were delivered from temptation.

'But deliver us from the Evil One.' If 'lead us not into temptation' had been a prayer to escape temptation altogether, he would not have said, 'But deliver us from the Evil One'. The Evil One is the Devil, who is our enemy; and we ask to be delivered from him.

When you have said the prayer through to the end, you say 'Amen'. By the 'Amen', which means 'Be it so', you signify your consent to everything contained in this God-given prayer.

REFERENCES AND CRITICAL NOTES

Abbreviations

- C.I.G. Corpus Inscriptionum Graecarum, Berlin.
 C.I.L. Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum, Berlin.
 D.A.C.L. Dictionnaire d'archéologie chrétienne et de liturgie, ed. Cabrol
 and Leclercq, contin. Marrou.
 M.E.L. Monumenta Ecclesiae Liturgica, ed. Cabrol and Leclercq, vols.
 1*a* and 1*b*.
 P.G. Patrologia Graeca, ed. Migne.
 P.L. Patrologia Latina, ed. Migne.
 P.O. Patrologia Orientalis, ed. Graffin and Nau.
 P.S. Patrologia Syriaca, ed. Graffin.

Part the First

1. Mt. 6:9-15. Unlike St. Matthew, who inserts the Lord's Prayer into the Sermon on the Mount, in accordance with his usual custom of grouping together material bearing on the same subject, St. Luke seems to be giving it in its historical context. There is a pious legend to the effect that Jesus taught his disciples this prayer on the Mount of Olives. See J. Lebreton, *The Life and Teaching of Jesus Christ our Lord*, London, 1935, 2. 61.

The Church has always preferred St. Matthew's longer version to the one given by St. Luke. The commentaries, too, from Tertullian and Origen onwards, all follow St. Matthew. (Cf. F. H. Chase, *The Lord's Prayer in the Early Church*, Cambridge, 1891.)

For a theological analysis of the scriptural texts, the reader might care to refer to *La Prière. I. Le Nouveau Testament*, by A. Hamman, Paris, 1959.

2. Lk. 10:21. The same text also appears in Mt. 11:25, 26.

3. Jn. 11:41, 42.

4. Lk. 22:19-20; Mk. 14:22-24; Mt. 26:26-28. These texts may be compared with St. Paul's narrative in 1 Cor. 11:23-25, which is no doubt older than any of them.

5. Jn. 17:1-26. The first writer to call this the high-priestly prayer was David Chytraeus (Kochlhafe, 1531-1600). Christ's priestly function receives marked expression in it; the prophet in him has given way to the high priest.

The Epistle to the Hebrews also lays great stress on his priestly office. The prayer is not unlike the 'Our Father'.

6. Mk. 14:36; parallel texts in Mt. 26:39 and Lk. 22:42. The words give the clearest possible expression to the duality of will in the God-man. They were to be continually quoted against the Monothelites in the seventh century.

7. Lk. 23:34: the inspiration of the prayer of Stephen the deacon. Mk. 15:34. Mt. 27:46: the first verse of Ps. 21, which ends with a vision of victory. Lk. 23:46 = Ps. 30:6: right to the end, Jesus uses the psalms to express his own thoughts in prayer.

8. Lk. 1:46-55. Although three MSS. of Latin origin attribute the Magnificat to Elizabeth, the authority of all the others, whether Greek, Coptic or Syriac, together with the ancient versions of the gospel and the quotations found in the fathers, to say nothing of the context itself, settle the question in favour of Mary.

9. Lk. 1:68-79.

10. Lk. 2:29-32.

11. Acts 4:24-30. The prayer is constructed after the manner of the synagogue prayers. See Tobias 3:13-23; 8:7-10, 17-19; and more particularly Is. 27:16-20.

12. Acts. 7:59-60. On the spot where the first martyr was stoned, a basilica was built by the Empress Eudocia. Finished in 460, it was destroyed by Chosroes and eventually rebuilt by the French Dominicans, who placed their École de Jérusalem under Stephen's patronage.

13. Rom. 11:33-36. The prayer is not inspired by fear, as some theologians have implied when discussing the question of sanctifying grace and sufficient grace. It is rather a tribute to the ingenuity of God's mercy, which in the end will bring salvation even to the Jews.

14. Rom. 15:5-6, 13, 33; 16:20.

15. Rom. 16:25-27. That St. Paul wrote chapters 15 and 16 is now generally admitted, even by the most sceptical; but the doxology quoted in the text is still the subject of lively controversy, because of the variants in the manuscript tradition. Cf. J. Huby, *Saint Paul, Épître aux Romains*, Paris, 1940, 490-5 and 513-20.

16. 1 Cor. 1:3-9.

17. 1 Cor. 13:1-13. On the controversy between Harnack, who interpreted agape as the love of one's neighbour, and Reitzenstein, who regarded it as man's love for God, see Anders Nygren, *Agape and Eros*, London, 1953, 134 ff.

18. 2 Cor. 1:2-4.

19. Eph. 1:3-19.

20. Eph. 3:14-21.

21. Phil. 1:3-11.

22. Col. 1:9-13.

23. Eph. 5:14. Most modern writers accept Theodoret's opinion (P.G. 82:545) that this is a fragment of a very old Christian hymn. Cf. Dölger, *Sol Salutis*, Munster, 1925, 365 ff.

24. 1 Tim. 1:17.

25. 1 Tim. 3:16-17. According to A. Boudou, *Saint Paul: les épîtres pastorales*, 1950, 130, St. Paul would seem to be quoting from a hymn in use among the faithful to celebrate Christ's triumph. See more particularly J. Schmitt (*Jésus Ressuscité, dans la prédication apostolique*, Paris, 1949, 86), who considers that it is a fragment of the baptismal prayer.

26. 1 Tim. 6:15. Meinertz (in Boudou, op. cit.) observes that this seems to be echoing the words of a hymn. Cf. J. Schmitt, op. cit., 99-104.

27. 2 Tim. 2:11-13 and 2 Cor. 1:20.

28. Jude 24-25.

29. Apoc. 1:5-6.

30. Ibid., 4:8. The symbolism of the four figures is inspired by Ezech. 1:5-21. St. Irenaeus suggests that the four figures are the four angels appointed to govern the material world, four being the number that symbolises the cosmos (Haer. 3:11; P.G. 7:885-886).

31. The earliest Christian writer to quote the Sanctus or Trisagion is St. Clement of Rome. See his Epistle, 34. 31. Apoc. 4:10-11. The crowns symbolise the power of government vested in the angels. Their power comes from God and must return to him.

32. Ibid., 5:9-10. Comparison of these verses with 1:6 will show how the liturgy of heaven fulfils the promises made to the chosen people and is the reality of what they knew in figure. It will also conduce to a better understanding of the Church's hierarchy.

33. Ibid., 5:11-14; 7:12.

34. Ibid., 15:3-4. The song of Moses is to be found in Exod. 15:2-19.

35. Apoc. 19:1-8. This is the only time that the liturgical acclamation, 'Alleluia' (Praise the Lord), taken by the Church from the synagogue, occurs in the New Testament. It is found in Psalms 106, 111-113, 135, 146-150 (Hebrew enumeration). The Book of Tobias, 13:22, says that it will be sung in Sion in the time of the Messias. Alleluia is widely used in the Christian liturgy, particularly to express the joy of Easter.

36. Apoc. 22:17, 20, 21. There are two ways of dividing this Aramaic expression. 'Maran atha' (perfect) means 'Our Lord has come'; 'Marana tha' (imperative) means 'Our Lord, come'. The second translation seems to fit the context of the Apocalypse better than the other. It shows how the early Christians' ardent longing for Christ found liturgical expression.

Nearly all these passages and many of the extracts given later will be found, sometimes in a slightly different order, in vols. 1a and 1b of the *Monumenta Ecclesiae Liturgica* edited by Cabrol and Leclercq—an indispensable work.

Part the Second

I

37. Epistle to the Corinthians, 59-61. *Opera Patrum Apostolicorum*, ed. F. X. Funk, Tübingen, 1887, i. 134. The authenticity of this prayer has never been seriously disputed. On its Jewish antecedents see E. von der Goltz, *Das Gebet in der ältesten Christenheit*, Leipzig, 1901, 192-207.

38. Epistle to the Ephesians, 4; P.G. 5:648.

39. Epistle to the Magnesians, 6-7; P.G. 5:668 B.

40. Epistle to the Romans, 4 and 7; P.G. 5:689, 693.

41. *Ibid.*, 5 and 6; P.G. 5:692.

42. *Adversus Haereseis*, 3:6. 4; P.G. 7:862 C.

43. *Ibid.*, 3:25. 7; P.G. 7:970 B.

44. Hom. 6 in Pasch.; P.G. 59:741-746. This homily is to be found among the spurious works of St. John Chrysostom but is certainly earlier than that saint. C. Martin attributes it to St. Hippolytus and takes it to be the *περὶ τοῦ Πάσχα* mentioned by Eusebius in his *Ecclesiastical History*, 6:22; P.G. 20:575. A MS. at Grottaferrata contains the first third of it and expressly attributes it to Hippolytus. See C. Martin in the *Annuaire de l'institut de philologie et d'histoire orientale et slave*, 1936, 321-363. This hypothesis was attacked by Dom Connolly. P. Nautin (*Homélies Pascales*, Paris, 1950, 1:34-57) analysed the homily in detail and concluded that it was not by Hippolytus but that it was clearly inspired by his *Περὶ τοῦ Πάσχα*.

45. P.G. 59:721. Like the last extract, which it resembles in its use of biblical material, this one too is found attributed to St. John Chrysostom. It draws its inspiration from Hippolytus of Rome.

46. Letter 11:8; ed. Bayard, 1:32-33.

47. Letter 30:6; *ibid.*, 1:75.

48. Letter 59:18; *ibid.*, 2:188.

49. Letter 76:7; *ibid.*, 2:314-315.

50. *Paedagogus*, 3:12; P.G. 8:680. The prayer attributed to Peter is taken from the Acts of Peter, 39. This work is a little earlier than Origen. Cf. L. Vouaux, *Les Actes de Pierre*, 116, 454.

51. *Paedagogus*, 3:12; P.G. 8:681.

52. Hom. 2 in Gen.; P.G. 12:174.

53. Hom. 3 in Gen.; P.G. 12:183 C.

54. Hom. 7 in Gen.; P.G. 12:203 B.

55. Hom. 15 in Gen.; P.G. 12:246 B.
56. Hom. 1 in Lev.; P.G. 12:406.
57. Hom. 6 in Lev.; P.G. 12:475.
58. Hom. 16 in Num.; P.G. 12:702.
59. Hom. 22 in Num.; P.G. 12:745 D.
60. Hom. 24 in Jos.; P.G. 12:941 C.
61. Hom. 10:5 in Ezech.; P.G. 13:745.
62. Hom. 15 in Luc.; P.G. 13:1839 C.
63. Hom. 5:2 in Is.; P.G. 13:235 D. This prayer was kindly brought to my notice by Père Bertrand, S.J., lecturer at Lyon-Fourvière.
64. Hom. 5:2 in Jer.; P.G. 13:297 A.
65. Hom. 2:7 in Cant.; P.G. 13:54 C.
66. In Cant., 2; P.G. 13:139 B.
67. Symposium, 11; P.G. 18:208 C. A. Puech (*Histoire de la littérature grecque chrétienne*, 2:600) says that the piece is composed of a responsorial psalm and a further psalm in twenty-four couplets, which begin with the letters of the Greek alphabet in their proper sequence. 'Clearly,' he says, 'the author is still influenced by the classical theories about metre, but he often breaks the rules.'

2

68. The early accounts of martyrdoms fall into three groups. First there are the *Acta* or *Gesta*, in the preparation of which the official records of the judicial proceedings were sometimes used. Next come the *Passions* and *Martyrdoms*, which were drawn up by eye-witnesses or by trustworthy writers contemporary with the events they were describing. Both classes of narrative were commonly used for reading at the annual commemorations of the martyrs. Most of the prayers in this chapter are taken from one or the other of these two groups. The third class, the *Legends* of the martyrs, are late in date and have scarcely any historical value. See B. Altaner, *Patrologie*, Friburg, 1958, 192.

The *Martyrium Polycarpi* is an account drawn up by a certain Marcion not long after the martyr's death. It is trustworthy in the main, although there are passages (such as the one with the chronological details) that seem to have been added later.

For the prayer given above, see *Martyrium*, 14; P.G. 5:1040 B, and Knopf-Krüger, *Ausgewählte Martyrerakten*, Tübingen, 1929, 5. There is as yet no critical edition of the acts of the martyrs apart from this latter work, which contains a selection only. For other martyrdoms we are left with Ruinart's *Acta Primorum Martyrum Sincera*, published in 1689 and reprinted in 1859. The book stands in need of critical revision.

69. Knopf-Krüger, 10-13. Altaner (*Patrologie*, 1958, 195) says that the martyrdom took place as early as the reign of Marcus Aurelius.

70. Ruinart, 214.

71. Ibid., 197; Knopf-Krüger, 56.

72. Ruinart, 263; Knopf-Krüger, 63. The death-sentence was received in the same way by the first African martyrs, the six Numidians from Scilium, who died at Carthage. The account of their martyrdom is the oldest surviving document of its kind. Knopf-Krüger, 29.

73. Ruinart, 323.

74. Ruinart, 438. Knopf-Krüger, 102, gives only the first few phrases.

75. Ruinart, 384.

76. Ibid., 313.

77. Knopf-Krüger, 91.

78. Ruinart, 434; Knopf-Krüger, 104.

79. Ruinart, 416-420. Delehaye says (*Les Passions des martyrs*, 116) that the writer was present at the scene and had taken down these moving words from the martyr's own lips.

80. Ruinart, 483-484. P. Allard (*Histoire des persécutions*, 4. 420) regards the second part of the Acts describing the saint's passion as authentic.

81. Ruinart, 330.

82. Ibid., 447. There is nothing to suggest that this prayer is genuine in the form in which we now have it. But as Cabrol suggests (*Le Livre de la prière antique*, 1910, 177), it may quite possibly have come from a very ancient ritual containing, among other things, a prayer in preparation for martyrdom. It is of great interest, in any case, for its biblical tone. It also has the majestic character of liturgical prayer.

83. P.S. 1 (2), 762. Kmosko prints two versions of this martyrdom.

84. Version 2; *ibid.*, 886.

85. Ibid., 906.

86. Ibid., 955.

87. Acts of Felicity and Perpetua; Ruinart, 146; Knopf-Krüger, 44. For the attribution to Tertullian, see Delehaye, *Les Passions des martyrs*, 65 and n. 2.

88. Acts of Fructuosus, Augurius and Eulogius; Ruinart, 267; Knopf-Krüger, 85.

89. P.O. 18:430. The first three prayers in this chapter come from a papyrus at Berlin. It may be that the collection of prayers contained in the papyrus was not part of an official liturgy but belonged to a euchologium used for morning prayers in a private family. Leclercq, who suggests this possibility

(*Monumenta Ecclesiae Liturgica*, Ib, CXCI), assigns the papyrus to the second century, but this seems too conjectural to permit of precise conclusions about the prayers.

For the sake of convenience, all the prayers from papyri and ostraca are grouped together in this chapter, even though some of them—those addressed to the Blessed Virgin, in particular—are later than 325, since it would be difficult to fit them into the third part of the book. There is great uncertainty, too, about the dates.

In 1934, C. del Grande produced a critical edition of some prayers from papyri in his *Liturgiae Preces, Hymni Christianorum* (Naples).

90. P.O. 18:430. The prayer has the vague title, 'Another'. It belongs to the third century and may perhaps have been used after the Sanctus.

91. Ibid., 431. The papyrus attributes this prayer to St. Peter and the other apostles. According to Reitzenstein and Wendland ('Zwei angeblich christliche liturgische Gebete', in *Nachrichten der K. Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen, Philologisch-historische Klasse*, 1910, 324) it is really an invocation from the hermetic *Poimandres*.

92. P.O. 4:195. This third- or early fourth-century papyrus was among the wealth of material discovered at Oxyrhynchus, in Egypt. Some consider that it belongs to the third century. This particular deposit has unfortunately not added much to our knowledge of ancient Christian literature.

93. D.A.C.L., art. Papyrus, 1381.

94. P.O. 18:442. This papyrus, now with the Egyptian antiquities at Berlin (P. 13415), was bought in 1911 at Ouchmounên (Hermopolis Magna) in Egypt. It was written in the fourth century.

95. M.E.L., Ib, CXLIX. (All the references to this work in the present chapter are to vol. Ib.) This papyrus is at Cairo and is written in a semi-cursive hand of the fifth or sixth century. The prayer reveals a quasi-sacramental veneration of the Scriptures. The woman had copied the beginnings of the gospels according to Matthew, Luke and John. It is not easy to see why St. Mark is missing. The intercession of the saints is plainly affirmed.

96. M.E.L., CCXLI. Ostrakon, Cairo Museum, no. 8193b. The prayer may have been said by the celebrant at the beginning of mass. It seems to be late in date—early sixth century.

97. M.E.L., CCVI. Papyrus discovered at Oxyrhynchus. Written in large and roughly made uncials. Fourth or fifth century.

98. Ibid., CCXL. Ostrakon from Thebes. The doxology seems to show that this potsherd is not so very ancient.

98a. Third-century hymn, discovered at Oxyrhynchus and printed by A. Gastoué in *La Tribune de saint Gervais*, Sept.-Oct., 1922.

99. M.E.L., CCXXXII. Ostrakon, National Museum, Brussels, no.

10952. The threecfold invocation is reminiscent of the Eastern liturgies. It seems fairly certain that the prayer comes from some proper for Christmas.

100. P.O. 18:437. Papyrus in the Berlin Museum. Seventh-century hand.

101. Ibid., 438. Papyrus from the Fayyum. Cabrol assigns it to the fourth century. The position of the alleluia is very unusual. That the Epiphany should be linked with St. John Baptist is not surprising, since the ancient liturgies (and for that matter, the present Roman one) commemorated our Lord's baptism by John on the same day.

102. M.E.L., CCII. Sixth-century papyrus in the Rylands Library, Manchester. An acrostic hymn on a loose leaf; six strophes of four lines each, followed by a refrain. The first strophe is missing.

103. P.O. 18:434. Ostrakon inscribed on both sides in the same hand. The composition must have been used as a hymn during the celebration of the eucharist.

104. M.E.L., CCXXXI. Ostrakon, Cairo Museum, no. 8156.

105. Ibid., CCXXXV. Ostrakon, Egyptian Exploration Fund, 101. Here again there are continual allusions to the Bible.

106. P.O. 18:445. Papyrus, Vienna, collection of the Archduke Rainer, nos. 19896 and 19898. The text is defective. The frequent repetitions have not been given in the translation. The meaning is not always clear: in several places conjecture alone could provide an acceptable sense.

107. Papyrus, Rylands Library, Manchester. The text has been kept almost word for word in the Eastern liturgies and in the Ambrosian rite. Dom Mercenier ('L'Antienne mariale la plus ancienne', in *Le Muséon*, 52 [1939], 229) assigns it to the third century. Not all scholars would agree.

108. M.E.L., CCXXXVI. Ostrakon with writing on both sides, discovered by Dr. Naville in the ruins of a Coptic monastery; Egyptian Exploration Fund, no. 105. The date is uncertain. Crum is inclined to assign it to the sixth or seventh century. Brightman regards it as an ancient form of the Hail Mary, intended for singing after the gospel, perhaps on the feast of the Purification.

109. Ibid., CCXVI. Ostrakon bought at Luxor in 1896 and now in the library at Strasbourg, no. 669. Reitzenstein considers that the hand is sixth century. Crum regards it as seventh century. It was deciphered by Dr. O. Plasberg. The homilies of the Eastern fathers could provide any number of examples of variations like this on biblical texts. Here it is the angel's greeting that has set the subject for development. It would be premature to conclude that because the word 'theodokos' is used instead of 'theotokos', the author must therefore have been a Nestorian. See also *Bulletin d'ancienne littérature et d'archéologie chrétienne*, 1912, 1-32.

Leclercq (M.E.L., CCXVI-CCXXVIII) studies the origins of the Hail Mary at length.

4

110. Acclamations are not specifically Christian; they were used in pagan Rome, where the crowds would shout them while they clapped their hands. They came into more frequent use under the emperors and then passed into liturgical use. See D.A.C.L., 1:246.

The acclamations translated here are in the form of prayers. They are a selection only; a fuller list will be found in M.E.L., 1:CI. They are grouped according to the main classes of subject-matter; *ibid.*, CI-CXL. For the sake of convenience, references to acclamations are to these pages.

For 'Peace and Rest', see M.E.L., CI-CVI.

111. M.E.L., CXVIII. These inscriptions are mainly Greek.

112. *Ibid.*, CI-CVI.

113. D.A.C.L., 1:246.

114. *Ibid.*, 1:245-247.

115. M.E.L., CIV, CXXVIII.

116. *Ibid.*, CIV and 68* (3321).

117. C.I.L., 10:1396. An inscription at Nola. Rossi assigns it to the fourth or fifth century. Each line is a separate verse from the Bible.

118. C.I.G., 4:9533. See also 9122, 9130, 9116 in the same volume. At this period, when the theology of the last things was still rudimentary, Abraham's bosom was regarded as a provisional resting-place for the souls of the just until the last judgement. Only the martyrs, it was thought, were allowed to see God before then. These ideas are found in the liturgies, both Eastern and Western (Apostolic Constitutions, 8:41), and are faithfully reproduced in the epitaphs. See D.A.C.L., 1:1522-1542.

119. G. Lefèvre, *Recueil des inscriptions grecques-chrétiennes d'Égypte*, 1907, no. 48. From Alexandria; date 409.

120. M.E.L., 1:29*, no. 2871. Roman; late third century. Descriptive epitaphs, like this one, with its picture of the welcome given to the soul on its arrival in heaven, are unusual. The endings of the lines are conjectural, because of the condition the stone is now in.

121. *Mélanges d'archéologie et d'épigraphie*, 1892, 582. This epitaph was found at Cairo and, according to A. Dumont, dates from 344. It has often been studied. Instead of 'father Sinethe', Gustave Lefèvre reads 'apa Pasine'. H. Leclercq (D.A.C.L., 1:1531) prints side by side with it the text of the Great Euchologium and another from a much later inscription. No. 208 below, a prayer for the dead from the euchologium of Serapion of Thmuis, in Egypt, is strangely like this inscription. It thus looks as though the composition were a liturgical formula.

122. M.E.L., 1:78*, no. 3424. Aringhi, the editor of this inscription, thinks

that it may possibly refer to Pope Eusebius, who died in 310. If so, that would enable us to date the Trinitarian formula.

123. D.A.C.L., 1: 1569. Coptic inscription.

124. Ibid., 1570. Inscription found at Tehneh (Egypt) by G. Lefèbvre and P. Jouguet.

125. Ibid., 1541. Epitaph from Milan. It is curious in that it seems to distinguish the provisional resting-place from the ultimate paradise.

126. Ibid., 2410. Inscription at Antioch. This kind of inscription seems to be later than the fourth century.

127. Kaufmann, *Gebete auf Stein*, Munich, n.d., 45. De Rossi considers that this is one of the oldest of the Roman inscriptions—late second century.

128. De Rossi, *Bulletino di archeol. cristiana*, Rome, 1877, 31. Roman inscription apparently dating from the third century.

129. Kaufmann, *Handbuch der christlichen Epigraphik*, 1917, 75. A later inscription, possibly going back to the fifth century.

130. D.A.C.L., 14: 1769. Fifth-century Egyptian epitaph.

131. Ibid., 1770.

132. D.A.C.L., 1: 3196, where a reproduction of the stone itself is also given. The epitaph was found in 1839 at Autun. The initial letters form an acrostic on the word 'Ichthus', the Greek letters of which are the initials of the titles of Christ. Leclercq (D.A.C.L., 1: 3198) assigns it to the end of the second century.

133. Ibid., 70 ff.—text, analysis and reproduction. Abercius was bishop of a town in Phrygia at the beginning of the third century. The epitaph was preserved in his episcopal city but had suffered with the passage of time. Ramsay found two fragments of it at Hierapolis, embedded in the masonry of the public baths. The fragments are now in the Vatican Museum.

134. Kaufmann, *Handbuch*, 151. The inscription in which this litany occurs was found in a burial-ground at Djebel Riha, between Aleppo and Alexandria. The construction of the piece, with its refrain, is reminiscent of the early hymns.

135. M.E.L., 1: 211*, no. 2850. Epitaph discovered near Naples.

136. Ibid., 36*, no. 2920. From Rome.

137. D.A.C.L., 4: 2238. Fifth-century inscription, now in the Lateran Museum.

138. Kaufmann, *Handbuch*, 412. Fifth century; of Syrian origin.

139. Ibid.

140. C.I.L., 3: 2674. From Salona, in Dalmatia.

141. C.I.L., 8 Suppl., 18,552. Discovered by Poullé near Djebel Nif-en-Nser.

142. Kaufmann, *Handbuch*, 162.

143. Ibid., 411.

144. D.A.C.L., 1: 2405. From the neighbourhood of Antioch, like the next four.
145. Ibid., 2411.
146. Ibid., 2412.
147. Ibid., 2414.
148. Ibid., 2415.
149. C.I.L., 11: 4964. Fifth century, found at Spoleto.
150. C.I.L., 8: 2, 643. Found at Ammaedra, in Tunisia.
151. E. Le Blant, *Inscriptions Chrétiennes de la Gaule antérieures au VIII^e siècle*, 1861, no. 208.
152. *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, 1905, 31.
153. Kaufmann, *Gebete auf Stein*, 72. From the church at Muallak.
154. Le Blant, *Inscriptions Chrétiennes de la Gaule*, 1: 28, n. 4.

5

155. Didache, 9, 10. The Didache has given rise to considerable disagreement among scholars. Two of the particularly disputed points—the date of the book and the purpose of the prayers translated—are relevant here.

With regard to the date, E. Amman places it between 90 and 120, Connolly after the rise of Montanism, Telfer about 180, Altaner (who also gives a detailed bibliography: *Patrologie*, 1958, 45) before 150, because of the style of the prayers and the allusions to Church organisation—it must at any rate, he says, have been written in the pre-Montanist period.

The two prayers translated above have also been the subject of much argument. Connolly holds that they were for use at the agape; Dibelius thinks they were composed by Greek-speaking Jews; Petersen regards them as a hymn to Christ. The most probable hypothesis seems to be that they are the oldest of the eucharistic prayers.¹

156. Hippolytus of Rome, *The Apostolic Tradition*: Latin text, introduction and notes by Dom B. Botte, Paris, 1946 (*Sources Chrétiennes*).

It was proved by E. Schwartz in 1910 and, conclusively, by Dom Connolly in 1916 that the Egyptian Church Order was none other than Hippolytus' *Apostolic Tradition*, the title of which was known from the base of a statue discovered in 1551 in the cemetery of the Agro Verano. Written at Rome about 215, the *Apostolic Tradition* underlies the majority of the old liturgical books—the Canons of Hippolytus, the Testament of Our Lord Jesus Christ, and the *Apostolic Constitutions*, particularly the *Epitome of Book VIII*.

¹ In the 1958 edition of his *Patrologie*, p. 45, Altaner, on whom the compiler relies for this opinion, abandons his position. [Tr.]

The work has come down to us only in Coptic, Ethiopian, Arabic and (to a very slight extent) Latin. The author wrote in Greek, which was the current language at the time, even in Rome.

For baptism, see The Apostolic Tradition, 21-22; Botte, 50-53.

157. Apost. Trad., 4; Botte, 30. The original anaphora seems to have had no Sanctus. Cf. the Chaldaean Anaphora of the Apostles, in *Orientalia Christiana Periodica*, 15:259; no. 167 below.

158. Apost. Trad., 7; Botte, 35.

159. Apost. Trad., 3; Botte, 27. Bishops were consecrated at the beginning of the mass.

160. Apost. Trad., 8; Botte, 38.

161. Apost. Trad., 9; Botte, 40. Of the chapters devoted by Hippolytus to holy orders, only one phrase has found its way into the Roman Pontifical. Hippolytus explains that at the ordination of a deacon the bishop alone, and not the priests, performs the laying-on of hands, *quia non in sacerdotium sed in ministerium (episcopi) consecratur*. The omission of the word *episcopi* makes the text of the Pontifical almost unintelligible.

162. Apost. Trad., 5; Botte, 34. On this blessing see Chavasse, 'L'Onction des infirmes dans l'Église latine', in the *Revue des sciences religieuses*, xx (1940), 65-75.

163. Apost. Trad., 6; Botte, 34.

164. Apost. Trad., 28; Botte, 63.

165. Apost. Trad., 26; Botte, 60. The authenticity of this chapter has been questioned. It occurs in the Ethiopian version of the Egyptian Church Order, and there are many parallels in the Testament of Our Lord Jesus Christ and the Canons of Hippolytus. See Botte (60, n. 2), who thinks it is genuine. M. Henri Chirat (*L'Assemblée chrétienne à l'âge apostolique*, Paris, 1949, 263, n. 1) says that the chapter is an interpolation.

166. Apost. Trad., 26; Botte, 61.

167. Cf. Dom Botte, 'L'Anaphore Chaldéenne des apôtres', in *Orientalia Christiana Periodica*, xv (1940), 261.

168. Apostolic Constitutions, 8:12; ed. Funk, 496. This edition replaces the one by Cotellier, reproduced by Migne in P.G. 1, and is still the standard edition.

The Apostolic Constitutions have been roughly treated by scholars. The Vatican Greek MS. 1506 would lead one to suppose that the author was an Arian. The Apollinarian who wrote the spurious letters of St. Ignatius used the Constitutions, and the work itself was condemned at the Council 'in Trullo', in 692. That does not mean, however, that we should discredit the whole of it or minimise the importance of the 'Clementine mass', which appears, according to Leclercq (D.A.C.L., 3:2753), to go back to the third century, at any rate as far

as its framework and certain indubitably ancient formulae of prayer in it are concerned. It can, moreover, be checked against parallel descriptions in St. Cyril of Jerusalem's fifth Mystagogical Catechesis and the homilies of St. John Chrysostom.

169. Apost. Const., 8:12. 35-38; Funk, 508. Analysis of this anaphora shows that the narrative of the last supper is fuller and that fresh details have appeared, not found in the Apostolic Tradition but later occurring in the Liturgy of St. James. A further novelty is that the epiclesis asks for the Holy Spirit to change the offerings. The building-up of the Church is not stressed to the same extent. In short, the Apostolic Tradition contains a greater wealth of theological teaching in fewer words.

170. Apost. Const., 8:12. 40-51; Funk, 510.

171. Apost. Const., 8:13. 12-13; Funk, 516. The existence of this formula is attested by St. Cyril of Jerusalem, who, however, gives only the beginning of it: 'One alone is holy, one alone is the Lord; there is only one Jesus Christ.' Catech. Mystag. 5:19; P.G. 33:1124.

172. Apost. Const., 8:15; Funk, 518.

173. Apost. Const., 8:15. 7-11; Funk, 520.

174. Apost. Const., 7:33; Funk, 424.

175. Apost. Const., 7:34; Funk, 426.

176. Apost. Const., 7:36; Funk, 432.

177. Apost. Const., 7:45. 3; Funk, 542.

178. Apost. Const., 7:48; Funk, 456.

179. The Euchologium of Serapion was first published by Wobbermin, to whom the credit for its discovery is due, in *Texte und Untersuchungen*, ed. Gebhardt and Harnack, new series, ii (1898). Funk, who had already edited the Apostolic Constitutions, afterwards published a second volume containing 'testimonia et scripturas propinquas', among which he included the Euchologium. The references here are to this latter edition, which was published at Paderborn in 1905. The order in which the prayers are given above is the one adopted by Funk, who replaced the original and somewhat disorderly arrangement by a more logical one. The original numeration is given in brackets.

As Brightman says, it is difficult to see where the 'first prayer on Sundays' would come in any of the known liturgies. The doxology is almost the same throughout. Basically, the later form is, 'Through the Only Son, in the Holy Spirit, through him . . .' and the earlier, 'Through him in the Holy Spirit . . .' From the fourth century, the form preferred by Catholics was, 'Through him, to you and the Holy Spirit. . . .' The expression 'glory and power' was a favourite with the Egyptians; we find it ten times in the Liturgy of St. Mark, while in the Liturgy of St. James it is used only once.

The First Prayer on Sundays: Euch. Serap., 1 (19); Funk, 158.

180. Euch. Serap., 2 (20); Funk, 160. The Coptic and Abyssinian Jacobites have a prayer after the gospel. See Brightman, *Liturgies Eastern and Western*, 1:157, 160.

181. Euch. Serap., 3 (21); Funk, 160. See Apost. Const., 8:6.

182. Euch. Serap., 4 (28); Funk, 162. See Apost. Const., 8:6.

183. Euch. Serap., 5 (27); Funk, 162. The litany or prayer for the people was to become an essential feature of all the Eastern liturgies. It is first foreshadowed in the prayer of St. Clement of Rome and the letters of St. Cyprian. See also Apost. Const., 8:10; Liturgy of St. Mark, Brightman, 1:119; Liturgy of St. James, ed. Mercier, P.O. 26, 171.

184. Euch. Serap., 6 (29); Funk, 164. Parallels in Apost. Const., 8:11; Nestorian liturgy, Brightman, 1:267; Armenian liturgy, *ibid.*, 429.

185. Euch. Serap., 7 (22); Funk, 164.

186. Euch. Serap., 8 (30); Funk, 166.

187. Euch. Serap., 9 (23); Funk, 166. See Liturgy of St. Mark, Brightman, 1:126.

188. Euch. Serap., 10 (24); Funk, 168. See the Second (apocryphal) Epistle of Clement, 14:2.

189. Euch. Serap., 11 (25); Funk, 168. This prayer seems to have been allotted to a priest.

190. Euch. Serap., 12 (26); Funk, 170. The implication is that for the other prayers, including the blessings, the people remained standing.

191. Euch. Serap., 13 (1); Funk, 172. Serapion's prayer of oblation has been subjected to detailed analysis by Dom Capelle ('L'Anaphore de Sérapion', in *Le Muséon*, xlix, 1-4, 425-443). From this it is clear that Serapion was departing from the formula which must have been in common use in the Egyptian Church, as custom would still at that time allow him to do. The Person asked to change the offerings (and later the baptismal water) is the Word, and not the Spirit. Serapion, who was a friend and disciple of St. Athanasius, was acting on the teaching contained in the 'Letters to Serapion'. It would therefore be a mistake to magnify the importance of any theological conclusions that might be drawn from this anaphora, as Lietzmann does in his *Messe und Herrenmahl*.

192. Euch. Serap., 14 (2); Funk, 176. The prayer at the breaking of the bread is found also in the liturgies of the Syrian, Coptic and Ethiopian Jacobites, either in isolation, as here, or as an introduction to the Lord's Prayer or in conjunction with it. See Brightman, 1:97, 181, 243.

193. Euch. Serap., 15 (3); Funk, 178. At first sight, it would seem that the clergy and faithful did not communicate together; but it might be, as Brightman observes, that at this point the celebrants simply gave particles to the clergy for them to distribute to the people.

194. Euch. Serap., 16 (4); Funk, 178. A parallel prayer is to be found in the Liturgy of St. Mark, Brightman, 1:141.

195. Euch. Serap., 17 (5); Funk, 178. See Apost. Trad., 5, no. 162 above.

196. Euch. Serap., 18 (6); Funk, 180. See Apost. Const., 8:15.

197. Euch. Serap., 19 (7); Funk, 180. It is instructive to compare this baptismal office with the one given in Apost. Trad., 19-20, no. 156 above.

198. Euch. Serap., 20 (8); Funk, 182.

199. Euch. Serap., 21 (9); Funk, 182.

200. Euch. Serap., 22 (15); Funk, 184. Cf. Apost. Trad., 21, no. 156 above. This anointing, which was to be given before baptism by way of exorcism, should be carefully distinguished from the anointing that followed baptism.

201. Euch. Serap., 23 (10); Funk, 184. The actual baptism must have been meant to come after this prayer.

202. Euch. Serap., 24 (11); Funk, 186. Brightman points out the relationship between this prayer and Didymus, De Trinitate, 2:12; P.G. 39, 673.

203. Euch. Serap., 25 (16); Funk, 186. There are not two anointings after baptism in this rite, as there are in the Apostolic Tradition, 21 and 22. The anointing seems to have been accompanied by the laying-on of hands: confirmation was still given in conjunction with baptism, and in this particular case a sort of contraction has taken place, so that baptism has the matter of both sacraments. The gift of the Holy Spirit was at first imparted by the laying-on of hands, in accordance with Acts, 8:17. The custom is attested by Irenaeus, *Hacr.*, 1:21, 3-5. It was the same in the third century, according to a letter from Firmilian, Bishop of Caesarea, in Asia Minor, to Cyprian (printed with Cyprian's letters 75:8, ed. Bayard, 294). The Chaldaeans, Copts and Ethiopians have the rite to this day. Judging by this prayer, one would say that in Egypt in 350, the two rites existed side by side. It is to be regretted that theologians have not analysed the sacramentaries and euchologia in sufficient detail to ascertain the teaching of tradition on this point.

204. Euch. Serap., 26 (12); Funk, 188. Cf. Apost. Trad., 9. It is not said whether the bishop is to lay one hand or both on the candidates. As in the case of priests, the text says 'the hand'. It would seem that the bishop was to lay one hand on priests and deacons alike.

205. Euch. Serap., 27 (13); Funk, 188. See Apost. Trad., 8.

206. Euch. Serap., 28 (14); Funk, 190. Cf. Apost. Trad., 3, where the prayer is richer in theological teaching.

207. Euch. Serap., 29 (17); Funk, 190. A further prayer for the blessing of oil (cf. no. 195 above). Although the title mentions water and bread as well, the prayer itself refers almost exclusively to oil. This must be the oil used for anointing the sick. Besides relieving illness, the sacrament of extreme unction

also remits sin. See Chavasse, 'L'Onction des infirmes dans l'Église latine', in the *Revue des sciences religieuses*, xx (1940), 65-75.

208. Euch. Serap., 30 (18); Funk, 192. A similar prayer will be found in the liturgy of the Coptic Jacobites, Brightman, 1:170.

6

209. N. Borgia, *Frammenti Eucaristici Antichissimi*, Grottaferrata, 1932. Nearly all the communion-hymns in this chapter are taken from this book. Borgia assigns them to the third or fourth century, the period before psalms were used for singing while the eucharist was being distributed, as they were later. By the end of the fourth century, Psalm 33 (*Benedicam Dominum in omni tempore*) was being sung at Jerusalem during the communion, because of the words, 'Gustate et videte quoniam suavis est Dominus', which were applied to the eucharist. See St. Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catech. Mystag.* 5:20; P.G. 33, 1124.

210. Borgia, 37. The fact that this fragment found its way into the apocryphal Acts of Thomas, which belong to the first half of the third century, shows how ancient a hymn it is. See *Acta Apostolorum Apocrypha*, ed. M. Bonnet, 2:268, and Lietzmann, *Messe und Herrenmahl*, Bonn, 1926, 247.

211. Another version of no. 210; 'Acta Thomae', in *Supplementum Codicis Apocryphi*, ed. M. Bonnet, Leipzig, 1883, 1:124.

212. Papyrus at Vienna in the collection of the Archduke Rainer, no. 19931. Printed by C. del Grande, *Liturgiae Preces, Hymni Christianorum e Papyris Collecti*, Naples, 1928, 29. Also in Borgia (51), who attaches the greatest importance to it. It may have been used as a ritual formula during the distribution of the precious blood.

213. Borgia, 59.

214. Dmitriewsky, *Typica*, Kiev, 1901, 174, from a tenth- or eleventh-century MS.; Borgia, 55. If the piece is sung on Easter day, the refrain is: 'You are receiving the body of Christ.'

215. Borgia, 63, from MS. Mess. Græc. 161, f. 12.

216. *Testamentum Domini Nostri Iesu Christi*, 1:35, ed. I. E. Rahmani, Mainz, 1899, 84.

217. *Oriens Christianus*, 1941, 60. The restraint shown by this Syriac prayer in naming our Lady is typical of the oldest forms of prayer.

218. *Ibid.*, 65. The editor of these two Syriac prayers does not venture to date them. I should be over-bold if I attempted to do so myself.

219. Borgia, 46.

220. Pitra, *Hymnographie de l'Église grecque*, Rome, 1867, 37.

221. *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, 1929-1930, 349. It would not be unreasonable to place the composition of this hymn before the Pseudo-Denis (fifth

century), who was the first to divide the angels into nine choirs. Here there are only seven.

222. Many historians (e.g. Jungmann, *Die Stellung Christi im liturgischen Gebet*, 144) have thought that the version of the Gloria in the Apostolic Constitutions is the earliest one. Père Lebreton (*Recherches de science religieuse*, 1923, 322-329) defends the version in the Codex Alexandrinus as being basically the oldest. Dom Capelle (*Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique*, xliv (1949), 439-457) has shown by a detailed analysis of the text how the author of the Apostolic Constitutions went about his work, and this in turn shows how he changed the text of the Gloria. We must therefore continue to hold that the version in the Codex Alexandrinus is basically the oldest, although we cannot vouch for the antiquity of every detail of it.

223. *Anthologia Graeca Carminum Christianorum*, ed. W. Christ and M. Paranikas, Leipzig, 1871, 40. See Smother, *Recherches de science religieuse*, 1929, 266-284; also Dölger, *Antike und Christentum*, 5:11-26.

224. Bunsen, *Analecta Ante-Nicaena*, 3 (*Reliquiae Liturgicae*, 1854), 88.

225. Ibid. A fragment of the Te Deum.

226. Pitra, *Hymnographie de l'Église grecque*, 37.

227. Apostolic Constitutions, 7:49; Funk, 458.

228. Pseudo-Athanasius, *De Virginitate*, 13-14; P.G. 28:265. Notice the debt to the Didache.

229. In St. John Chrysostom, Hom. 55:5 in Mt.; P.G. 57-58, 545. The saint gives the prayer as a monastic thanksgiving.

230. E. F. von der Goltz, 'Tischgebete und Abendmahlsgebete in der altchristlichen und in der griechischen Kirche', in *Texte und Untersuchungen*, 29 (1905), N.F., 14, 44. This is the best collection of this type of material.

231. Ibid., 45.

232. J. Goar, *Euchologion, sive Rituale Graecorum*, 716; E. F. von der Goltz, *Tischgebete*, 42.

233. Goar, 716.

234. Ibid. It will be noticed that this prayer is very like the one in the Apostolic Constitutions, no. 227 above.

235. Goar, 655. Cf. the more elaborate prayer in Apost. Const., 8:40; Funk, 848.

236. *Euchologium Sinaiticum*, ed. J. Frček; P.O. 24:689. This euchologium is a collection of prayers from the Slavonic liturgy. It contains material of the highest antiquity. It derives its name from the monastery of St. Catherine on Mount Sinai, where it was discovered in 1880. See Goar, 865.

237. *Testamentum Domini Nostri Iesu Christi*, 1. 43, ed. Rahmani, 100.

238. *Euchologium Sinaiticum*; P.O. 24. 734, 735.

239. Ibid., 670-671.

240. *Didascalia Apostolorum*, 7, ed. H. Connolly, Oxford, 1929, 72. The prayer bears the name of Manasses in allusion to 2 Paralipomena, 33:12 ff. It is of Jewish origin but was written in Greek. In the third century it was incorporated into the *Didascalia Apostolorum* and was used in Christian worship.

241. P.L. 4:985. These two prayers are to be found among the works of the Bishop of Carthage, who was at one time confused with the former magician, Cyprian of Antioch. Migne gives a Latin version of them. Per Lunberg (*La Typologie baptismale dans l'ancienne Église*, Uppsala, 1942) argues against the thesis of K. Michel (*Gebet und Bild in frühchristlicher Zeit*, Leipzig, 1902, 2-22), who regards them as exorcisms. The Latin prayers, Lundberg says, gave rise to the prayers for the catechumens and these in turn to the exorcisms (*La Typologie*, 63). There are also versions in Greek and various oriental languages. These are quite different from the Latin version and are magical in tone, but they seem to come from some baptismal liturgy (*ibid.*, 59).

242. P.L. 4:987.

Part the Third

I

243. We owe this extract to the monk Schenute, who simply translated from a treatise by St. Athanasius on virginity. A fragment of the Coptic version, together with a translation, has been published by Lefort (*Le Muséeon*, xlii, 272). My attention was drawn to it by M. Henri Chirat.

244. Orat. 45:30; P.G. 36:664.

245. *Ibid.*, 7:24; P.G. 35:788. Caesarius is venerated by the Church as a saint. His feast is celebrated on the 25th February. Instead of mourning, Noma, the mother of Gregory and Caesarius, wore her best clothes when the remains of her son were carried to their new resting-place.

246. *Poemata Dogmatica*; P.G. 37:507. Although this masterpiece appears among the poems of St. Gregory of Nazianzus, it may be questioned whether the saint really wrote it. See J. Plagnieux, *Saint Grégoire de Nazianze théologien*, Paris, 1952, where there is a long critical note on the poem, 332-334.

247. *Ibid.*; P.G. 37:511. See also *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, 1941, 195.

248. *Ibid.*; P.G. 37:517.

249. *Poemata de Seipso*; P.G. 37:1279. Events mentioned in the poem show that it was written in 382.

250. *Ibid.*; P.G. 37:1280.

251. *Ibid.*; P.G. 37:1284.

252. *Ibid.*; P.G. 37:1305. This too was written in 382.

253. *Ibid.*; P.G. 37:1406. Written in 383.

254. *Ibid.*; P.G. 37:1408.

255. Ibid.; P.G. 37:1422.
 256. Ibid.; P.G. 37:1425. Written after 383.
 257. Ibid.; P.G. 37:1423.
 258. De Vita S. Macrinae; P.G. 46:984 B.
 259. Sermon on the Baptism of Christ (or for the Feast of Lights); P.G. 46:597 D.
 260. Expositio Fidei, 2; P.G. 42:776 C. This and the following extract were brought to my notice by Rahner's *Mater Ecclesia*, Einsiedeln, 1944.
 261. Hom. 19 in Ps. 5; P.G. 40:433 B.
 262. Ibid.; P.G. 40:436 C.
 263. Hymn 5; P.G. 66:1608.
 264. Homiliae Diversae, 4; P.G. 77:992. Homily preached at Ephesus; the most famous sermon in praise of Mary in the ancient Christian period. My attention was kindly drawn to this passage by Père Camelot, O.P., of Le Saulchoir.

2

265. Sermons 3 and 4 for Holy Week; ed. Lamy, 1:390, 426.
 266. Hymni Dispersi, 18; ed. Lamy, 4:748. Also in the Syriac Breviary for the feast of the Ascension.
 267. Proverbs, 130. In *Ausgewählte Schriften des hl. Ephräm von Syrien* (Bibliothek der Kirchenväter, Kosel, Kempten, 1876), 3:494, tr. P. Zingerle; also in *Opera*, ed. Assemani, Rome, 1732, 1:110 F. The version is an ancient one and is the work of a master, according to G. Bickell, the editor of the *Carmina Nisibena* (Leipzig, 1886).
 268. Sermon on the fear of God and the last day, 12; Zingerle, 1:165.
 269. Sermon on the Passion, 9; *ibid.*, 1:269; Assemani, 3:249.
 270. This prayer, attributed to Macarius of Egypt, was translated by F. Nau in the *Revue de l'Orient chrétien* in 1907, 322.
 271. P.G. 34:448. Migne simply reproduces the text printed by Floss from MSS. at the Vatican, Vienna and Berlin. There is nothing to show that the prayer is by Macarius.
 272. Prayer composed for the feast of All Saints, 396, and occasioned by a plague of locusts and other calamities, particularly an invasion by the Huns. Taken from Brit. Mus. Add. Ms. 14591, 72-77; first edited and translated by G. Bickell, *Ausgewählte Gedichte der syrischen Kirchenväter*, Kempten, 1872, 24. The hymn is interesting structurally. Syriac poetry falls into two classes, one of which (Mimrê) is a sort of epic, sometimes didactic and sometimes narrative, and is meant to be recited, while the other (Madrashê) is a kind of hymn composed of strophes sung by a soloist and separated by an unchanging refrain repeated by a choir. No. 272 is a mimrê, but it begins with a madrashê.

273. *Ausgewählte Schriften der syrischen Kirchenväter*, Kempten, 1874, 262.

274. *Ibid.*, 264. Bickell says that the MSS. expressly attribute this prayer to Rabbula.

275. Prayer for the consecration of a church at Quenneschrein, a town in the mountains near Aleppo. Bickell, *Ausgewählte Gedichte*, 77. The original is cut into by a series of digressions. Only the more typical parts are given here.

276. *Ibid.*, 107. Bickell uses more than one MS. for his translation of this prayer.

277. From Brit. Mus. Add. Ms. 14591, 33, and MS. Vat. 117, 323; Bickell, *ibid.*, 164. Isaac tells us himself how this nocturn came to be written—he was rising one night for the office with other monks when they heard blaring music, broken by singing, from the direction of Antioch. The monks were about to sing Psalm 92.

Isaach of Antioch is not to be confused (as he is by Cayré, *Précis de patrologie*, 1: 375) with Isaach of Edessa, a Monophysite and the probable author of a poem 2137 lines long on the parrot. See Altaner, *Patrologie*, 1958, 312.

278. *Revue de l'Orient Chrétien*, 1907, 321.

279. Bickell, *Ausgewählte Gedichte*, 246. A little before this the same author writes: 'A single stain on Mary's soul, a single sin, and the Lord would have made another choice, for his mother must needs be spotless' (235). There is a similar passage in Ephraem: 'Fair indeed you are in every respect, and fair in every way is your mother; for in you, Lord, there is no defilement, and in her there is no pollution.' (*Carmina Nisibena*, 27: 44; ed. Bickell, 122).

3

280. De Trinitate, 1: 37–38; P.L. 10: 48 C. It is surprising that St. Hilary is so little read and translated—though he is certainly not easy to translate!

281. *Ibid.*, 6: 19, 21; P.L. 10: 171 B.

282. *Ibid.*, 12: 52, 53, 57; P.L. 10: 466 C.

283. De Poenitentia, 2: 8, 67, 73; P.L. 16: 513 B. Note the resemblance to Origen, from whom Ambrose derived much of his inspiration.

284. Exp. in Luc. 2: 87–88; P.L. 15: 1585. Books 1 and 2 depend on Origen.

285. De Obitu Valentiniani, 80; P.L. 16: 1384. Valentinian II was assassinated at the age of twenty, on the 15th May, 392, at the instigation of his tutor, Argobast. Ambrose felt his death all the more keenly in that the young emperor had not yet been baptised. The funeral-sermon is sometimes called 'Consolatio de Obitu Valentiniani', after the manner of Seneca and Cicero, while at other times it receives the title, 'Epistula de Consolatione'.

286. De Obitu Theodosii, 36; P.L. 16: 1397 A. Theodosius had won the throne by his victory at Aquileia, the 6th September, 394. He died a natural death in 395.

287. P.L. 16:1409. Hymn sung at lauds on Sundays outside the special liturgical seasons.

288. Ibid. In addition to this hymn and the previous one, which are unquestionably genuine, two others—*Iam surgit hora tertia* and *Intende qui regis Israel*—are also certainly by him.

289. Cathemerinon; P.L. 59:775. See D.A.C.L., 6:2904.

290. Ibid., 907.

291. Abecedarius; P.L. 19:763 B.

292. Ibid., 765 A. In addition to adopting these two hymns by Sedulius, the Church also uses some verses of his for the introit of the mass *Salve sancta parens*, the common mass of our Lady. He is the only non-scriptural author to have received this privilege.

293. Carmina, 19:718; P.L. 61:550. I owe this passage to the kindness of M. Pierre Fabre and to his book, *Saint Paulin de Nole et l'amitié chrétienne*, Paris, 1949, 102–103.

293a. Ep. 32:5; P.L. 61:333. The inscription alludes to the building of a new porch to join two churches together. The churches had previously been separated by a baptistery, the work of Sulpicius Severus.

294. A Provençal or Mozarabic hymn, first attested in 534 by St. Caesarius of Arles in his *Regula ad Virgines*, 66; ed. Morin, 2:120. My attention was kindly drawn to it by Père Gy, O.P., of Le Saulchoir.

295. P.L. 13:402 A.

296. I. Schuster, *The Sacramentary*, London, 1924, 1:23. The inscription is on the architrave of the Lateran basilica. Dölger, who has made a special study of it (*Antike und Christentum*, 2 [1930], 253), says that it is by Pope Leo the Great.

297. Schuster, 2:24. This inscription was probably put up in the consignatorium of the Vatican baptistery, where the wooden chair used by St. Peter was kept.

298. On the origin and structure, etc., of the *Te Deum*, see A. E. Burn, *The Hymn Te Deum and its Author*, 1926; J. Jungmann in *Zeitschrift für katholische Theologie*, 1937, 105; A. Baumstark in *Oriens Christianus*, 1937, 1–26; Frost in the *Journal of Theological Studies*, 1933, 250; 1938, 388.

4

299. The Liturgy of St. James must have taken shape at Jerusalem in the fourth century. The essential features of it are to be found in the Catecheses of St. Cyril of Jerusalem—or of John, if that is who the author was. In the fifth century, after the Council of Ephesus, certain additions were made to it and the doctrine that Mary is the mother of God was emphasised.

The Liturgy of St. James was composed in Greek but had not long to wait before it was translated into Syriac. Both texts gave rise to other versions.

The oldest Greek and Syriac MSS. of the liturgy—MS. Vat. Graec. 2282 and Brit. Mus. MS. 256—go back to the seventh and ninth centuries. The first printed edition was published by Morel, at Paris, in 1560.

The critical edition of the Greek text with a Latin translation in P.O. 26 (2) is by Dom B. Mercier. The references in this chapter are to that edition. See also Rucker, *Die syrische Jacobsanaphora*, Münster, 1923.

Preparation for mass: P.O. 26 (2), 162.

300. Ibid., 170.

301. Ibid., 182. Note that in the Eastern rites, the kiss of peace is given before the great eucharistic prayer. The practice is based on Mt. 5:23-24, where the Lord tells his disciples to make their peace with their brethren before they offer sacrifice.

302. Ibid., 186. This litany is said by the deacon, whereas the third one, known as the memento of the living, is said by the celebrant, at the end of the anaphora.

303. Ibid., 198.

304. Ibid., 206.

305. Ibid., 234.

306. The present text of the Liturgy of St. Basil was used everywhere in the East by the early sixth century, as is shown by a letter written about 520 by the monks of Scythia to the African bishops exiled to Sicily (P.L. 65:449).

Dom Engberding gives a critical edition of the first part of the anaphora in *Das eucharistische Hochgebet der Basileiosliturgie*, Münster, 1931. Reference may also be made to Renaudot's famous *Liturgiarum Orientalium Collectio*, Paris, 1716, 1:1-25, or Brightman's *Liturgies Eastern and Western*, Oxford, 1896, 321-330.

See also J. Moreau, *Les Anaphores des liturgies de saint Jean Chrysostome et de saint Basile*, 1927.

For the part taken by St. Basil in liturgical reform, see St. Gregory of Nazianzus, Orat. 43:34; P.G. 36:541-544.

307. Text in Renaudot, 2:242, and Brightman, 321. Syriac text with Latin translation in *Anaphorae Syriacae*, Rome, 1940, 1 (2), 158, ed. H. Codrington. See also H. Engberding, 'Die syrische Anaphora der zwölf Apostel', in *Oriens Christianus*, 1937, 213.

The so-called Anaphora of St. John Chrysostom is certainly not by that saint; it was not even attributed to him until the twelfth century. The Barberini MS. attributes only two prayers to him. The anaphora seems to belong to the fourth century.

308. Critical edition of the Syriac text and the Latin translation by A. Raes

in *Anaphorae Syriacae*, I (2), 212. Raes bases his text on the tenth-century Brit. Mus. Ms. 286. He gives a second version, slightly longer than the first and in more frequent use than the other (*ibid.*, 240).

309. *An Early Euchologium: The Dêr-Balizeh Papyrus Enlarged and Re-edited*, by C. H. Roberts and B. Capelle, Louvain, 1949, 22. This edition of the Dêr-Balizeh papyrus, considerably enlarged by the discovery of further fragments, has enabled scholars to review the position and drop some of the conclusions that were too hastily drawn when the papyrus was first discovered.

310. 'Fragments sur papyrus de l'anaphore de saint Marc', ed. Andrieu and Collomp in the *Revue des sciences religieuses*, viii (1928), 489-515. The fragment translated above is on p. 500.

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311. De Sacramentis. 4:5, 21 ff.; P.L. 443; critical edition by Dom B. Botte (Sources Chrétiennes), Paris, 1950.

312. B. Capelle, 'Le Kyrie de la messe et le pape Gélase', in the *Revue Bénédictine*, xlv (1934), 136.

313. Leonine Sacramentary; P.L. 55:146. The first edition, made from the Verona MS., was published by the Bianchini brothers.

314. *Ibid.*, 147. The sacramentary contains nine different sets of prayers for Christmas alone (though the other mysteries are not so well provided for as the mystery of the Nativity). Unfortunately, the prayers for the first three months of the year have disappeared—which means that we have no Easter liturgy. We have the prayers for the liturgical year only from April to December.

315. *Ibid.*, 149. Another preface for the same feast.

316. *Ibid.*, 37.

317. *Ibid.*, 42. The parallel between the tower of Babel and Pentecost is often drawn in the Latin liturgy.

318. *Ibid.*, 48. It is hard to know which of the many prefaces for SS. John and Paul would be the best to choose.

The preface for the apostles in the present Roman Missal was originally prescribed by the Leonine Sacramentary for SS. Peter and Paul, the princes of the apostles.

319. *Ibid.*, 86.

320. *Ibid.*, 72. This preface is more moralising in tone than most, but it is not for that reason any the poorer theologically. A. Chavasse, in his recent study of the Leonine Sacramentary in *Ephemerides Liturgicae*, lxiv (1950), 187-192, attributes it to Pope Vigilus.

321. *Ibid.*, 112. Preface for the September ember days, which come in harvest-time. Same authorship as no. 320.

322. P.L. 74:1061. The Gelasian Sacramentary has survived in a single

MS.—Reginensis 316 (once the property of Christina of Sweden) which, in view of the uncial hand in which it is written, must belong to the eighth century. It was first printed by Cardinal Tommasi. Its full title is *Liber Sacramentorum Romanae Ecclesiae*. The three books of which it is composed contain 1. the masses for the great feasts and the liturgical seasons; 2. the masses for the saints and for Advent; 3. the ordinary of the mass.

The MS. was written in France, perhaps at Paris. The contents are basically Roman, with Gallican additions and alterations.

323. P.L. 74:1112. The Easter preface in the present Roman Missal also comes from the Gelasian Sacramentary; *ibid.*, 1113.

324. A. Paredi, *I Prefazi Ambrosiani*, Milan, 1937 (text and critical study), 130.

325. *Ibid.*, 136.

326. *Ibid.*, 138.

327. *Ibid.*, 139.

328. *Ibid.*, 148.

329. *Ibid.*, 152.

330. *Ibid.*, 201. This preface must date from the middle of the fifth century, no doubt from after the destruction of the cathedral at Milan by the Huns in 452. It must have been written for the consecration of the new cathedral, at which Maximus of Turin preached the sermon; P.L. 57:467. It seems to be based on St. Ambrose's Commentary on St. Luke, 2:86-88; P.L. 15:1584.

Part the Fourth

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

ON THE ANCIENT TREATISES ON PRAYER

The oldest commentary on the Our Father is Tertullian's *De Oratione*; P.L. 1:1149.

Cyprian used Tertullian when he wrote his treatise *De Oratione Dominica*; P.L. 4:519. The part of Cyprian's work that deals directly with the Lord's Prayer is given above in full.

Origen's *De Oratione* treats of prayer in general and includes a commentary on the Our Father; P.G. 2:4161.

Cyril of Jerusalem (or his successor, John) paraphrases the Our Father in the fifth Mystagogical Catechesis, 2; P.G. 33:1117.

Gregory of Nyssa comments on the Lord's Prayer in a series of five homilies; P.G. 44:1120.

Ambrose gives a paraphrase of the prayer in his *De Sacramentis*, 5:20-29; P.L. 16:451.

Theodore of Mopsuestia explains the prayer in his catechetical homilies.

See the edition of the Syriac text (the only edition, as far as I know), together with a Latin translation, by Père Tonneau, Vatican City, 1949.

Peter Chrysologus devotes five sermons to a commentary on the Lord's Prayer; P.L. 52:665.

Reference may also be made to *Le Pater expliqué par les Pères*, by A. Hamman, Paris, 1952.

In addition, all the commentaries on Matthew and Luke contain observations on the prayer.

331. Apost. Trad., 35; ed. Botte, 68. This chapter is a duplicate of chapter 31. Apart from the information given in the Didache, these are the earliest details we have about prayer in the primitive Church.

332. Ibid.; Botte, 69.

333. Ibid., 36; Botte, 73.

334. Origen, *De Oratione*, 8; P.G. 11:441 B. The extracts translated will show something of Origen's exegetical method. He follows the text more closely than any of the other commentators; his exegesis is thorough and searching. The Greek of this treatise is particularly difficult and laboured.

335. Ibid., 10; P.G. 11:445.

336. Ibid., 445 C.

337. Ibid., 11:448 B, 449.

338. Ibid., 449 B.

339. Ibid., 12:452.

340. Ibid., 14:460 B.

341. Ibid., 31:549 B.

342. Ibid., 552 C.

343. Ibid., 22:481 C.

344-363. Cyprian, *De Oratione*, 8; P.L. 4:523. As the chapters translated from Cyprian's treatise are consecutive, there is no need to enumerate them separately here: they are indicated in brackets in the headings to the text.

364. *Catechesis Mystagogica*, 5:11-18; P.G. 33:1117. W. J. Swaans ('A propos des "catéchèses mystagogiques" attribuées à saint Cyrille de Jérusalem', in *Le Muséon*, 55 [1942], 1-43) maintains that the author of the catecheses is not Cyril of Jerusalem but his successor, John. Père Peeters, however, thinks that Swaans's arguments are not conclusive (*Analecta Bollandiana*, 61 [1943] 270-271).

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE

<i>General History</i>	<i>The East</i>	<i>The West</i>	<i>Works referred to</i>
14-37 Tiberius ?30 Ascension Pentecost 36 Martyrdom of Stephen 37-41 Caligula 41-54 Claudius 44 Imprisonment and release of Peter 54-68 Nero			St. Paul's Epistles (52-66)
64 (?67) Martyrdom of St. Peter 67 Martyrdom of St. Paul 70 Destruction of Jerusalem 81-96 Domitian; persecution of Christians		Clement of Rome pope	St. John's Apocalypse (92-96) Epistle of St. Clement of Rome (96) St. John's Gospel (96-98)
98-117 Trajan	Death of Ignatius of Antioch (107) Martyrdom of St. Polycarp (155) Martyrdom of St. Justin (163) Martyrdom of SS. Carpus, Papylus, Agathonike (160-180)		The Didache (150) Prayer of Polycarp (155 or 177)
161-180 Marcus Aurelius			

193-211	Septimius Severus	Clement of Alexandria (†150-211)			Tertullian: De Oratore (198-200) Apostolic Tradition Anaphora of the Apostles Origen: De Oratore (233-240)
202	Beginning of persecution		Death of St. Irenaeus (202) Tertullian (†200) Hippolytus of Rome		
235-240	Dismemberment of the Empire	Origen (†185-255)			
250-253	Systematic persecution of Christians throughout the Empire				
250	Edict ordering persecution	Martyrdom of SS. Lucian & Marcian		Martyrdom of St. Cyprian of Carthage (258)	Cyprian: De Oratore Dominica (250)
284-305	Dioletian				
293-305	Violent persecution	Martyrdom of SS. Theodotus, Boniface, Philip of Thrace		Martyrdom of SS. Rogatian and Donatian, Euplus, Irenaeus of Sirmium, Genesius, Felix, Afra, martyrs of Augsburg	
		Methodius of Olympus (†311)			
313	Edict of Milan				
323	Arian heresy spreads Constantine sole Emperor				
	St. Pachomius founds a monastery				
325	Council of Nicaea condemns Arianism	Serapion of Thmuis (†362) Athanasius (293-373) Martyrdom of Simeon Sabba'e		Hilary of Poitiers (315-367)	
339-376	Sapor II of Persia persecutes Christians	Ephraem (306-373) Basil the Great (330-379) Cyril of Jerusalem (†386)			St. Hilary: De Trinitate (356-359) Apostolic Constitutions Euchologium of Serapion

<i>General History</i>	<i>The East</i>	<i>The West</i>	<i>Works referred to</i>
351-361 Arian controversy	Gregory of Nazianzus (329-390)	Ambrose of Milan (339-397)	Liturgy of St. James
Constantius	Gregory of Nyssa (†394)	Jerome (347-410)	Ambrose: De Sacramentis
366-384 Pope Damasus	Macarius the Great (†390)	Prudentius (348-410)	Liturgy of St. Basil
378-395 Theodosius			Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom
381 Council of Constantinople			
390 The Emperor Theodosius does penance	Epiphanius of Salamis (†403)		
392 Death of Valentinian II	John Chrysostom (354-407)		
	Theodore of Mopsuestia (†428)		
395 Death of Theodosius	Cyrillona (4th Cent.)		
	Asterius of Amasia (†410)		
	Synesius of Cyrene (370-413)		
	Rabbula (†430)	Sedulius	
406-409 Vandal invasion of Gaul	Cyril of Alexandria (†444)	Paulinus of Nola (353-431)	
410 Alaric seizes Rome		Death of St. Augustine (430)	
		Peter Chrysologus (†450)	
430 Council of Ephesus			Ambrosian prefaces
431 Vandal conquest of Africa			Leonine Sacramentary
440-461 Leo the Great	Balai		
451 Council of Chalcedon	Isaach of Antioch		
condemns Monophysite heresy	Schenute (†466)		
402-496 Pope Gelasius			Gelasian Sacramentary

GLOSSARY OF TECHNICAL TERMS

Agape. Evening meal, eaten in common as a sign of charity. It originally preceded the celebration of the eucharist.

Age. Generally used above to translate the Greek 'acon' (Hebrew 'olam'). The Greek and the Hebrew can refer either to time or to space. The word may denote either a precisely limited stretch of time or a period that is unlimited and incalculable—it has a greater wealth of meaning than the corresponding English term. God is the King of the ages because he is the norm against which all time is measured as it passes.

Alleluia. A Hebrew expression meaning, 'Praise the Lord'. An exclamation denoting joy; an exhortation to do battle or to toil at one's allotted task. As a shout of triumph it is particularly fitted for Easter, for Sundays and for the worship of God in heaven.

Amen. Root of the Hebrew word for 'truth'. It means: 'Yes, that is true', or 'Be it so'. It denotes affirmation and acceptance: 'Yes. With all my heart.'

Anamnesis. From the Greek for 'to remember' or 'to call to mind'. The name given to the commemoration at mass of the chief mysteries in the history of mankind and the main phases of Christ's life. It comes after the narrative of the institution and it generally begins with some such phrase as, 'Calling, then, to mind . . .'

Anaphora. A Greek word for 'offering'. The central part of the mass; in its essentials, it goes back to the early days of the Church. When used of the Eastern liturgies, the word denotes the part of the mass corresponding to the Latin canon.

Apocrypha. Books not recognised by the Church as belonging to the canon, or collection of inspired writings. A certain number of them claim to be by Christ or the apostles.

Arianism. A heresy which denied that the Word was the Father's equal in all respects. With different degrees of emphasis, Arius and the various kinds of Arians all refused to admit that the Word was God in the fullest sense.

Blessing. To bless God is to acknowledge his perfections and the gifts he gratuitously gives us, and in consequence to worship and thank him. To bless a person is to transmit God's gifts to him in all their perfection. The power to bless is possessed by those who share in the fatherhood of God (priests, parents).

Canon. A Greek word meaning 'rule'. The essential and never varying part

of the Latin mass, the part in which the consecration of the bread and wine occurs. The word is also used for the inspired books of the Bible considered as a whole.

Catechumen. Candidate for baptism.

Communion. Fellowship with God through Christ (and the Holy Spirit); fellowship with other Christians. The Eucharist is the sacrament of communion.

Confess. Recognise, avow; proclaim one's faith. Used particularly of the martyrs. Also used of one who recognises or avows his own weakness and sinfulness. The faithful 'confess' their sins.

Consignatorium. The place where the bishop performed the 'consignatio' or anointing, after baptism. The consignatorium was near the baptistery.

Copt. Name given by the Arabs to the Egyptians. It first denoted the non-hellenised inhabitants of the country; then 'Coptic' was used for their language and finally it was applied to their liturgical rite.

Covenant. Pact whereby God and the Jewish people undertook to remain loyal to each other. Its full significance was not evident before the coming of Christ. The Eucharist is the sacrament of the Christian Covenant.

Dedication. Solemn consecration of a church. The ceremonies are similar to those used at baptism.

Doxology. From a Greek word for 'glory'. A liturgical formula concerned with the glory, honour and praise which are God's due. The Christian practice is to address the doxology to God or, more explicitly, to the three Persons of the Trinity. The commonest form of short doxology is the Gloria Patri (Glory be to the Father); a longer one is the Gloria in the mass.

Epiclesis. Greek for 'invocation'. Part of the anaphora, generally addressed to the Holy Spirit, who is asked to change the offerings into the body and blood of Christ.

Eucharist. From the Greek for 'thanksgiving': acknowledgement of God's gifts to us. The mass is the 'eucharist' par excellence, the supreme means of worshipping, blessing and praising God, through and with Christ.

Faithful. One who, having faith in God, sets his heart on God.

Glory. Not only fame, but that on which fame is based: the person's greatness, wealth or nature. Giving glory to God (doxology) means acknowledging the greatness which is his as God.

Hades, hell. Sometimes the place where the reprobate are punished; sometimes the place where all the dead, just and sinners alike, lead a shadowy sort of existence.

Hosannah. A Jewish exclamation: 'Hurrah'.

Israel. The name given by God to Jacob and also used for the chosen people (the Jews), who were descended from Jacob physically. It was later applied to the Church, for the Church is the chosen people in the spiritual sense.

Jerusalem. The capital of Palestine, founded by David. It anticipates and prefigures the Church and the city of God in heaven.

Justice. God's justice is primarily his truth to his word; secondarily, it is his equity in judging. In man, justice is the frame of mind that wins God's approval.

Liturgy. The prayer used by the Church, considered as God's chosen people, to convey to the Most High the worship of the whole community. It consists principally of the eucharistic sacrifice (especially where the Eastern rites are concerned), but also of the sacraments and the divine office or canonical hours.

Messias. A Hebrew word equivalent to 'Christ': one consecrated priest or king by anointing.

Mystery. That which is hidden from man's sight and reason, i.e. God and his providential plan. God thus had to reveal (literally, 'unveil') his designs if he wanted men to know them. He did this chiefly through Christ (see St. Paul's Epistles). The expression, 'God's mysteries', is used of the mass.

Nestorianism. A heresy which maintains that there are two persons in Christ.

Orthodox. In conformity with the true faith. By extension, one who professes the true faith taught by the Church.

Ostracon. A fragment of pottery, used by the less affluent, especially in Egypt, as a writing-material.

Papyrus. A plant, the bark of which was used, especially in ancient Egypt, as material for MSS.

Preface. The introduction to the prayer of consecration in the Latin rites. It begins with a dialogue between the celebrant and the people and ends with the Sanctus.

Sabaoth. A Hebrew word denoting the whole people organised as an army. God has an army of angels always at his disposal to carry out his orders.

Sacramentary. A liturgical book containing the text of the masses for the whole year and sometimes the prayers for administering the other sacraments also.

Satan. A Hebrew word meaning 'enemy'. It is applied to the Devil.

Sion. Synonym for Jerusalem. Mountain conquered by David and used by him for his capital.

Synagogue. Place where the Jews assembled for religious purposes on the Sabbath. There was a synagogue in every district, whereas there was only one Temple for the whole of Israel.

Tabernacle. Means 'tent' and denoted the portable tent which served the Israelites as a sanctuary on their wanderings. It contained the ark of the covenant. Also the place where the Lord dwells in the eucharist.

Thanksgiving. To give thanks to God is to acknowledge his perfections and his infinite goodness. The supreme thanksgiving is the mass, as is implied by the

Greek word, 'eucharistia', the name used from the very beginning of Christianity for the sacrifice of the altar.

Trisagion. A chant used in the Eastern rites. It calls upon God three times, first as holy, then as strong and lastly as immortal. It occurs in the Latin rites on Good Friday. The term is sometimes applied to the Sanctus at the end of the preface.

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¹ This index is not exhaustive; its purpose is merely to suggest ways of using the book.

² All the prayers may be used before the Blessed Sacrament.

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